



# Washington State Fusion Center INFOCUS

TUESDAY — 31 MAY 2022



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## Events, Opportunities

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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Russia widens Europe gas cuts</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russia-widens-europe-gas-cuts-gazprom-halts-dutch-traders-supply-2022-05-31/">https://www.reuters.com/business/energy/russia-widens-europe-gas-cuts-gazprom-halts-dutch-traders-supply-2022-05-31/</a>
GIST	<p>May 31 (Reuters) - Russia widened its gas cuts to Europe on Tuesday with Gazprom (GAZP.MM) turning off supply to top Dutch trader GasTerra escalating the economic battle between Moscow and Brussels and pushing up European gas prices.</p> <p>The move comes a day after Denmark flagged a potential end to its Russian gas supply and the European Union's toughest measure yet against Russia for its invasion of Ukraine, an agreement to halt sea-borne imports of its oil. <a href="#">read more</a></p> <p>GasTerra, which buys and trades gas on behalf of the Dutch government, said it had contracted elsewhere for the 2 billion cubic metres (bcm) of gas it had expected to receive from Gazprom through October.</p> <p>"This is not yet seen as a threat to supplies," said Economy Affairs Ministry spokesperson Pieter ten Bruggencate.</p> <p>Danish firm Orsted (ORSTED.CO) on Monday warned that Gazprom Export could also halt its supply but it too said such a move would not immediately put Denmark's gas supplies at risk.</p> <p>The benchmark front-month gas contract rose around 5% on Tuesday morning to around 91 euros/MWh but remained well below highs over 300 euros/MWh hit in early March.</p> <p>"While the market was largely expecting both companies to be cut off, this development will make the supply-demand balance that much tighter," ICIS analyst Tom Marzec-Manser said on Twitter.</p> <p>Russian gas flows to Germany via the Nord Stream pipeline fell on Tuesday which analysts said was likely due to the cut off to the Netherlands.</p> <p>Moscow had already stopped natural gas supplies to Bulgaria, Poland and Finland citing their refusal to pay in Russian roubles, a demand made in response to Western sanctions that have isolated Russia including cutting it off from the SWIFT international bank messaging system.</p>

	<p>The gas supply cuts have boosted already high gas prices, turbocharging inflation and spurring European governments and companies to chase alternative supply and the infrastructure to handle it, including floating storage and regasification units (FSRUs).</p> <p>Europe has been rushing to fill its gas storage sites to shore up supplies ahead of winter, wary of cuts in supply from Russia, which typically provides around 40% of Europe's gas.</p> <p>Dutch gas storage is currently around 37% full, data from Gas Infrastructure Europe showed.</p> <p>The Dutch government last week said it would increase subsidies to 406 million euros to encourage companies to fill the Bergermeer facility, one of the largest open-access gas storage facilities in Europe.</p> <p>On Monday European Union leaders agreed in principle to cut the EU's Russian oil imports by 90% by year-end, stepping up pressure on Russia over its invasion of Ukraine, which Moscow refers to a "special military operation".</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Wheat crop drops from drought, heavy rain</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/us-wheat-crop-hit-by-dry-winter-then-soggy-spring-adding-global-tightness-2022-05-31/">https://www.reuters.com/markets/commodities/us-wheat-crop-hit-by-dry-winter-then-soggy-spring-adding-global-tightness-2022-05-31/</a>
GIST	<p>May 31 (Reuters) - North Dakota farmer Dwight Grotberg wanted to plant more wheat this spring to capitalize on soaring prices since Russia's invasion of Ukraine cut grain exports and left the world short of millions of tonnes of wheat supply.</p> <p>Heavy rain has prevented Grotberg from planting as much wheat crop as he wanted and is hampering farmers across the state, the top U.S. grower of spring wheat.</p> <p>Instead of boosting supply, North Dakota expected to plant wheat over the smallest share of its farmland on record, according to government data.</p> <p>The United States is the world's fourth-largest wheat exporter and problems are hitting output at a time when the world can ill afford to lose any more supplies of the staple grain amid a global food crisis.</p> <p>Benchmark Chicago Board of Trade wheat prices surged 50% to more than \$13.60 a bushel after Russia's invasion in February halted shipments of nearly a third of the world's wheat exports, and little has gone right for wheat since then.</p> <p>Worsening harvest prospects in China and parts of Europe, followed by an export ban by major producer India, have tightened stocks and exacerbated global food supply concerns.</p> <p>The United Nations has warned the impact of the war on grains, oils, fuel and fertilizer could throw millions of people into famine and take years to resolve.</p> <p>Washington has been calling on U.S. farmers to seed more winter wheat this autumn, and the government said it would allow planting on some environmentally sensitive land beginning this fall. But the drought and costly farm inputs could limit production gains, say grain analysts.</p> <p>There are two wheat crops in the United States: spring wheat planted now, and winter wheat planted in autumn that will be harvested soon. Both are in trouble.</p> <p>The problems with the spring wheat planting faced by farmers like Grotberg come after drought hit the winter wheat crop in Kansas, the top growing state.</p>

The U.S. winter wheat harvest potential there has fallen by more than 25% due to severe drought. Kansas farmers may abandon thousands of acres of wheat in fields this year, instead of paying to harvest the drought-scorched grain.

Back in North Dakota, it is too much water that is the problem. An historic April blizzard left the state's expansive, pothole-dotted fields under more than 3 feet (1 m) of snow in some areas, triggering floods as the deluge melted.

Grotberg has only been able to plant about 500 acres (200 hectares) with wheat so far - just a quarter of the land he had aimed to sow - because of the wet conditions.

Seeds sown in soggy soils can struggle to emerge or come up unevenly, while heavy farm machinery can tear up overly muddy fields, compact soils or get lodged in the muck.

Now, Grotberg's planting window is closing fast.

Wheat planted too late in the spring is likely to yield less grain or be at risk of frost before the crop fully ripens.

"We're stuck ... Normally we're wrapping up wheat planting by this time," Grotberg said.

#### **SLOWEST SPRING PLANTING SINCE 1996**

Soggy spring weather has all but ensured that the northern U.S. Plains breadbasket will not produce a bumper crop this year.

U.S. farmers have only seeded 49% of their intended spring wheat acres as of May 22, matching 2014 for the slowest pace since 1996, according to U.S. Department of Agriculture data.

In North Dakota, which produces about half of U.S. spring wheat, growers have planted just 27% of their crop, the second slowest pace in four decades.

"Some farmers have not turned a wheel yet," said North Dakota Agriculture Commissioner Doug Goehring. "If North Dakota is not able to get a substantial amount in, it's just going to wreak more havoc on the global market."

#### **ABANDONING SHRIVELED WINTER WHEAT**

In the southern U.S. Plains, winter wheat farmers have received very little rain and are concerned about the size of their harvest - or if the shriveled plants will simply need to be plowed under.

A private group touring wheat fields in Kansas in mid-May forecast its harvest would shrink by 28% this year and more fields than normal may go unharvested due to drought damage.

About 6% of the state's planted acres would be abandoned, according to the latest USDA estimates. But given the drought damage, Kansas State University wheat agronomist Romulo Lollato thinks the abandonment rate would be higher.

"I would not be surprised if 8%, 9%, 10% " of planted acres are abandoned this year, Lollato said.

In neighboring Colorado, abandonment could top 30%, Colorado Wheat Executive Director Brad Erker told tour participants.

"Wheat yields are affected by weather in May, and we've had a really dry May," said Kansas farmer Vance Ehmke. "The trend is not our friend."

#### **DISAPPEARING WHEAT ACRES**

	<p>U.S. wheat output has been on longer-term decline as farmers favored corn and soybean production, which are more lucrative due to demand from biofuels producers. Seed science also has boosted their yields by 30% or more since 2000, outpacing just 6% for wheat.</p> <p>Biofuels demand is likely to continue to erode wheat acres as two new soy processing plants are set to open in eastern North Dakota, including one by Archer-Daniels-Midland Company that will supply Marathon Petroleum Corporation (MPC.N) with soyoil for renewable diesel fuel.</p> <p>As the planting window in the northern Plains narrows, North Dakota farmers are weighing options that include shifting to soybeans, which can be sown later in the spring than wheat, or filing prevented planting insurance claims.</p> <p>"It gets pretty tempting to file those claims," Grotberg said. "Once you get into June, you might be lucky to get half a crop. And with costs as high as they are, that's hard to stomach."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Iran protesters chant anti-govt. slogans</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran-protests-death-to/2022/05/31/id/1072209/">https://www.newsmax.com/newsfront/iran-protests-death-to/2022/05/31/id/1072209/</a>
GIST	<p>Protesters in several cities in Iran chanted anti-government slogans overnight, including "death to Khamenei," over a deadly building collapse in the southwest of the country, videos posted on social media showed.</p> <p>Officials said the death toll had risen to 34 on Tuesday, with another 37 injured in the May 23 collapse of the 10-story residential and commercial building in Abadan in the oil-producing region of Khuzestan. Rescue workers continued to search for victims under the rubble, they said.</p> <p>Authorities are blaming the collapse of the Metropol Building on individual corruption and lax safety and say 13 people have so far been arrested for construction violations.</p> <p>Iranian protesters, however, blame it on government negligence and endemic corruption.</p> <p>Shouts of "death to Khamenei," a reference to Supreme Leader Ali Khamenei, are heard on an unverified video shared on Twitter, which gives the location as the south Tehran district of Nazi-abad.</p> <p>Anti-Khamenei slogans are considered a red line for the Islamic Republic.</p> <p>Another unverified video shows riot police roaming on motorcycles in the same area, apparently to disrupt or intimidate protesters.</p> <p>In the southern port city of Bushehr, protesters are heard shouting "Death to the dictator," also a reference to Khamenei.</p> <p>"They're lying that it's America; our enemy is right here," they shout. That is a common slogan during anti-government protests in Iran.</p> <p>Videos of protests in other Iranian cities are also posted on social media.</p> <p>Iranian police have used tear gas and fired shots in the air to disperse crowds and have clashed with demonstrators during the week-long protests.</p> <p>In covering the disaster, official Iranian media have mainly shown religious mourning and funeral processions. Speaking on state television, Abadan's governor has warned people to solely follow official media and eschew "rumors" from social media.</p>

	Iranians are already frustrated with high food prices and economic problems at a time when efforts have stalled to achieve a revival of a 2015 nuclear deal with world powers and, with it, relief from sanctions.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Ukraine troops hold out in Sievierodonetsk</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/headline/ukraine/2022/05/31/id/1072210/">https://www.newsmax.com/headline/ukraine/2022/05/31/id/1072210/</a>
GIST	<p>Ukrainian forces were still holding out in Sievierodonetsk on Tuesday, resisting Russia's all-out assault to capture a bombed-out wasteland that Moscow has made the principal objective of its invasion in recent days.</p> <p>Both sides said Russian forces now controlled between a third and half of the city. Russia's separatist proxies acknowledged that capturing it was taking longer than hoped, despite one of the biggest ground assaults of the war.</p> <p>Western military analysts say Moscow has drained manpower and firepower from across the rest of the front to concentrate on Sievierodonetsk, hoping a massive offensive on the small industrial city will deliver something Russia can call a victory in one of its stated aims in the east.</p> <p>"We can say already that a third of Sievierodonetsk is already under our control," Russia's TASS state news agency quoted Leonid Pasechnik, the leader of the pro-Moscow Luhansk People's Republic, as saying.</p> <p>Fighting was raging in the city, but Russian forces were not advancing as rapidly as might have been hoped, he said, claiming that pro-Moscow forces wanted to "maintain the city's infrastructure" and were moving slowly because of caution around chemical factories.</p> <p>The Ukrainian head of the city administration, Oleksandr Stryuk, said the Russians now controlled half of the city.</p> <p>"Unfortunately ... the city has been split in half. But at the same time the city still defends itself. It is still Ukrainian," he said, advising those still trapped inside to stay in cellars.</p> <p>Ukraine says Russia has destroyed all of the city's critical infrastructure with unrelenting bombardment, followed by wave after wave of mass ground assault involving huge numbers of casualties.</p> <p>Thousands of residents remain trapped. Russian forces are advancing towards the city center, but slowly, and have not succeeded in encircling the Ukrainian defenders holding out there.</p> <p>Regional governor Serhiy Gaidai told Ukrainian television there did not appear to be a risk of Ukrainian forces being encircled, though they could ultimately be forced to retreat across the Siverskiy Donets river to Lysychansk, the twin city on the opposite bank.</p> <p>Stryuk, head of the city administration, said evacuating civilians was no longer possible. Authorities canceled efforts to evacuate residents after an attack on Monday that killed a French journalist.</p> <p>Jan Egeland, secretary general of the Norwegian Refugee Council aid agency which had long operated out of Sievierodonetsk, said he was "horrified" by its destruction.</p> <p>"We fear that up to 12,000 civilians remain caught in crossfire in the city, without sufficient access to water, food, medicine or electricity. The near-constant bombardment is forcing civilians to seek refuge in bomb shelters and basements, with only few precious opportunities for those trying to escape."</p> <p>Elsewhere on the battlefield, there were few reports of major action on Tuesday. In the east, Ukraine says Moscow is trying to assault other areas along the main front, including pressing towards the city of</p>

Solviansk. In the south, Ukraine claimed in recent days to have pushed back Russian forces on a bank of the Inhulets River that forms a border of Russian-held Kherson province.

## OIL BAN

After having failed to capture Kyiv, been driven out of northern Ukraine and made only limited progress elsewhere in the east, Moscow has concentrated the full force of its armed might in recent days on Sievierodonetsk, which had a pre-war population of around 110,000.

Victory there and in adjoining Lysychansk would let Moscow claim control of Luhansk province, one of two eastern regions it claims on behalf of separatist proxies, partly achieving one of President Vladimir Putin's stated war aims.

But the huge battle has come at a massive cost, which some Western military experts say could hurt Russia's ability to fend off eventual Ukrainian counterattacks elsewhere, regardless of who wins the battle for Sievierodonetsk.

"Putin is now hurling men and munitions at the last remaining major population center in (Luhansk), Sievierodonetsk, as if taking it would win the war for the Kremlin. He is wrong," the Washington-based Institute for the Study of War think tank wrote this week.

"When the Battle of Severodonetsk ends, regardless of which side holds the city, the Russian offensive at the operational and strategic levels will likely have culminated, giving Ukraine the chance to restart its operational-level counteroffensives to push Russian forces back."

The EU on Monday agreed its toughest sanctions against Russia since the war began, for the first time targeting Russian sales of oil, by far Moscow's main source of income.

The EU will now ban import of Russian oil by sea. Officials said that would halt two-thirds of Russia's oil exports to Europe at once, and 90% by the end of this year as Germany and Poland also phase out imports by pipeline.

Hungary, which relies on Russian oil through a huge Soviet-era pipeline, secured an exemption, though EU officials said they expected this would be "temporary."

Ukraine says the sanctions are taking too long and are still too full of holes to stop Russia: "If you ask me, I would say far too slow, far too late and definitely not enough," said Ihor Zhovkva, deputy head of President Volodymyr Zelenskiy's office.

Moscow, meanwhile, has switched off gas supplies to several EU countries in a dispute over how to receive payments, although the moves so far, during warm months when demand is lower, have yet to have the severest impact. On Tuesday, Russia switched off the main Dutch gas buyer, GasTerra, which said it would find supplies elsewhere.

Putin launched his invasion of Ukraine in February claiming Moscow aimed to disarm and "denazify" its neighbor. Ukraine and its Western allies call this a baseless pretext for a war to seize territory.

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HEADLINE	05/31 War crimes meeting in The Hague
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/headline/russia-ukraine-war-crimes/2022/05/31/id/1072217/">https://www.newsmax.com/headline/russia-ukraine-war-crimes/2022/05/31/id/1072217/</a>
GIST	Representatives of a group of nations working together to investigate war crimes in Russia's invasion of Ukraine are meeting in The Hague amid ongoing calls for those responsible for atrocities to be brought to justice.



Tuesday's coordination meeting at the European Union's judicial cooperation agency, Eurojust, of members of a Joint Investigation Team and International Criminal Court Prosecutor Karim Khan comes as Russian forces continue to pound Ukrainian towns.

Moscow's invasion of Ukraine has been widely condemned as an illegal act of aggression. Russian forces have been accused of killing civilians in the Kyiv suburb of Bucha and of repeated attacks on civilian infrastructure including hospitals and a theater in the besieged city of Mariupol that was being used as a shelter by hundreds of civilians. An investigation by The Associated Press found evidence that the March 16 bombing killed close to 600 people inside and outside the building.

Since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, the AP and PBS series Frontline have verified 273 potential war crimes.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy has denounced killings of civilians as "genocide" and "war crimes," while U.S. President Joe Biden has called Russian President Vladimir Putin "a war criminal" who should be brought to trial.

The joint investigation team, made up of Ukraine, Lithuania and Poland, that is meeting Tuesday in The Hague was established in late March, a few weeks after the ICC opened an investigation in Ukraine, after dozens of the court's member states threw their weight behind an inquiry. Khan has visited Ukraine, including Bucha, and has a team of investigators in the country gathering evidence.

Ukraine's prosecutor general, Iryna Venediktova, will be among those at the meeting. Her office has already opened more than 8,000 criminal investigations related to the war and identified over 500 suspects, including Russian ministers, military commanders and propagandists.

Last week, in the first case of its kind linked to the war, a Ukrainian court sentenced a captured Russian soldier to the maximum penalty of life in prison for killing a civilian. On Tuesday, a court in Ukraine convicted two Russian soldiers of war crimes for the shelling of civilian buildings and sentenced both to 11 1/2 years in prison.

Russia staunchly denies its troops are responsible for atrocities. The Defense Ministry said earlier this month that "not a single civilian has faced any violent action by the Russian military."

Analysts warn that the process of meting out justice will be long and complex as investigators piece together forensic and other evidence and seek to establish who ordered or knew about atrocities and failed to act to prevent or punish them.

The meeting in The Hague isn't the only place accountability is being sought.

Prosecutors in Poland, Germany, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, France, Slovakia, Sweden, Norway and Switzerland have opened investigations of their own. And there have been growing calls to set up a special tribunal to try Russia for the crime of aggression in Ukraine. The ICC can't prosecute the crime of aggression because neither Russia nor Ukraine are members of the court.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 UK report: Russia army faces collapse</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10869009/Russian-army-COLLAPSE-amid-huge-losses-30-000-troops-confidential-UK-report-says.html">https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10869009/Russian-army-COLLAPSE-amid-huge-losses-30-000-troops-confidential-UK-report-says.html</a>
GIST	<p>Russia's army could collapse amid huge losses of more than 30,000 troops in Ukraine, according to a confidential UK report that emerged on Monday.</p> <p>While Moscow's latest estimated troop losses make grim reading for President Vladimir <a href="#">Putin</a>, the report claims he sees them as a 'price worth paying' for victory.</p>



However, the new report - a secretive analysis of Putin's brutal invasion seen by [The Mirror](#) - claims that the losses could be too great for his soldiers, amid other reports that Russian morale is low.

Latest estimates from the [Ukraine](#)'s Armed Forces suggest as many as 30,350 Russian soldiers have been killed since the invasion was launched on February 24, which came after more than 100,000 of the Kremlin's troops massed on the border.

In addition, several thousand Russian military vehicles - including tanks, aircraft and mobile artillery units - have been destroyed in Putin's so-called 'special military operation' that has dragged into its fourth month.

In the latest example of heavy Russian losses, it was reported on Monday that a Ukrainian paratrooper regiment destroyed a Russian regiment.

Former Ukrainian journalist and editor, and a Ukraine Army veteran, Viktor Kovalenko claimed: 'The Ukrainian 80th Paratrooper-Storm Brigade confirms that they annihilated a unit of the Russian 104 Paratrooper-Storm Regiment (76th Division).'

He said around 20 Ukrainian servicemen were killed and their armour destroyed in the attack. The location of the assault was not reported.

According to The Mirror, the new report suggests Kremlin officials have tried and failed to persuade Putin that his invasion has been a disaster, and that he believes he can still achieve a partial victory in the eastern Donbas region of Ukraine.

A victory in the region would give Russia leverage over Kyiv, the report says, while defeat would likely result in Putin being ousted as president.

Meanwhile, Russian troops pushed farther into a key eastern Ukrainian city and fought street by street with Kyiv's forces Monday in a battle the mayor said has left the city 'completely ruined' and driven tens of thousands from their homes.

On Monday, military analysts painted the battle as part of a race against time for the Kremlin, which they said wants to complete its capture of the industrial Donbas region before more Western arms arrive to bolster Ukraine's defences.

According to The Mirror, the confidential report says: 'Russia's attempt to achieve a speedy and decisive victory in the Donbas has not yet succeeded. They are still grinding forward, gaining 1-2km a day.

'The Russians are now achieving what successes they have mostly by means of a slogging match with repeated, very costly, infantry attacks reminiscent of 1945 not 2022.'

It goes on to say that so far, Putin has been able to mostly hide the 'gross failures' of the invasion from the Russian public, or blame them on other Kremlin officials.

'The Russian population until recently bought Putin's disinformation. We have seen an attempt within the Kremlin to get a message across to Putin and his closest team that things are going wrong, perhaps even catastrophically wrong,' it adds.

On the report, British Russia commentator Bruce Jones told The Mirror that there will eventually come a point where Putin's forces can no longer sustain any more losses.

'This would be a straw that broke the camel's moment, where units would no longer be able to function as a fighting force because they are so depleted,' he said.

In recent days, the fighting has focused on Sievierodonetsk in a battle Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky has called 'indescribably difficult.'

The Ukrainian military said Russian forces reinforced their positions on the northeastern and southeastern outskirts of Sievierodonetsk, 90 miles south of the Russian border in an area that is the last pocket of Ukrainian government control in Luhansk province.

Relentless Russian artillery barrages on the city have destroyed critical infrastructure and damaged 90 percent of the buildings, and power and communications have been largely cut to a city that was once home to 100,000 people.

Luhansk Gov. Serhiy Haidai said the Russians were also pushing toward nearby Lysychansk. He said two civilians were killed and another five were wounded in the latest Russian shelling.

Sievierodonetsk and Lysychansk sit on either side of the strategically important Siverskiy Donetsk River - and the Russian advance on the cities is part of an all-out push - executed without regard for personnel and equipment losses, said Ukrainian military analyst Oleh Zhdanov.

'There is an impression that Russia has set the goal to seize Donbas at any cost,' said Zhdanov.

'The Kremlin has reckoned that it can't afford to waste time and should use the last chance to extend the separatist-controlled territory because the arrival of Western weapons in Ukraine could make it impossible.'

But in a potential setback for Ukraine, President Joe Biden appeared to dismiss reports that the U.S. was considering sending long-range rocket systems to the country.

On Monday, Biden told reporters that there are no plans for the U.S. to send long-range rocket systems to Ukraine, amid reports that the move is being considered.

Weapons from the West have already helped Kyiv's forces thwart a Russian advance on the capital in the early weeks of the war.

That failure forced Moscow to withdraw, regroup, and pursue a more limited objective of seizing the Donbas, where Moscow-backed separatists already held swaths of territory and have been fighting Ukrainian troops for eight years.

The Ukrainians hope they can hold the Russians off long enough for them to run out of steam - or for more Western weapons to arrive.

Ukrainian officials have warned of the dire cost if more help does not arrive soon.

'The number of victims is rising every hour, but we are unable to count the dead and the wounded amid the street fighting,' Mayor Oleksandr Striuk told The Associated Press in a phone interview, adding that Moscow's troops advanced a few more blocks toward the city center.

'The city has been completely ruined,' he added, and only about 12,000 to 13,000 residents remain, sheltering in basements and bunkers to escape the Russian bombardment - a situation that recalls the siege of Mariupol that trapped residents and led to some of the worst suffering of the war.

While tens of thousands are believed to have died in Mariupol, Striuk estimated that 1,500 civilians have died in his city since the war began, from Russian attacks as well as from the dire conditions, including a lack of medicine or medical treatment.

A 32-year-old French journalist, Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff, died Monday near Sievierodonetsk when he was hit by shrapnel from shelling while covering Ukrainians evacuating the area, according to his employer, French broadcaster BFM TV.

Mykola Sunhurovskyi, a military expert at the Kyiv-based Razumkov Center think tank, said weapons are taking a long time to arrive - given the Russians an opening to take advantage of the slow delivery and make up for difficulties its forces had earlier in the war.

'Russia clearly has been trying to take revenge for its past failures in Ukraine and achieve at least some of its goals,' Sunhurovskyi said.

Russian pressure also continued in the south on Monday. Russian Defence Ministry spokesman Maj. Gen. Igor Konashenkov said an artillery strike on a shipyard in the southern port of Mykolaiv destroyed Ukrainian armoured vehicles parked there.

In the Kherson region, the Russia-installed deputy head of the regional administration, Kirill Stremousov, told Russia's Tass state news agency that grain from last year's harvest is being delivered to Russian buyers, adding that 'obviously there is a lot of grain here.'

Ukraine has accused Russia of looting grain from territories its forces hold, and the U.S. has alleged Moscow is jeopardizing global food supplies by preventing Ukraine from exporting its harvest.

Beyond long sieges of cities, Russia's troops have also been accused of carrying out targeted killings and other atrocities in areas they briefly held around Kyiv early in the war.

On Monday, prosecutors submitted the first rape case of the war to a court - the last step before a trial begins. A 31-year-old Russian soldier is accused of killing a man and raping his wife in Bohdanivka, a village northeast of Kyiv, officials said. The soldier's whereabouts aren't known and he will be tried in absentia, prosecutors said.

Dmitry Medvedev, the deputy head of Russia's Security Council, said that was a 'reasonable' decision. He said that 'otherwise, if our cities come under attack, the Russian armed forces would fulfill their threat and strike the centers where such criminal decisions are made.'

Medvedev added that 'some of them aren't in Kyiv.'

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Russia, meanwhile, has pressed the West to lift sanctions against it as it seeks to shift the blame for the growing food crisis - which has led to skyrocketing prices in Africa.

Zelensky urged France not to succumb to such 'blackmail' as the Ukrainian president met Monday with French Foreign Minister Catherine Colonna.

Meanwhile, European Union leaders struggled on Monday to agree to impose an oil embargo on Russia, as Ukraine's president urged them to set aside their differences and endorse a long-delayed package of sanctions aimed at piling more economic pressure on Moscow to halt the war.

	<p>The EU has already imposed five rounds of sanctions on Russia over its war.</p> <p>It's targeted more than 1,000 people, including Putin and top government officials, as well as pro-Kremlin oligarchs, banks, the coal sector and more.</p> <p>But a sixth package of measures, announced on May 4, has been held up by concerns over oil supplies. The EU gets about 40% of its natural gas and 25% of its oil from Russia, and the divisions are embarrassing the 27-nation trading bloc and exposing the limits of its ambitions.</p> <p>Addressing the EU leaders Monday by video-link in a 10-minute message, Zelensky urged them to end 'internal arguments that only prompt Russia to put more and more pressure on the whole of Europe.'</p> <p>He said the sanctions package must 'be agreed on, it needs to be effective, including (on) oil,' so that Moscow 'feels the price for what it is doing against Ukraine' and the rest of Europe.</p> <p>Only then, Zelensky said, will Russia be forced to 'start seeking peace.'</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/30 Homeless at gates of Disney</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10858659/Disney-homelessness.html">https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-10858659/Disney-homelessness.html</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>It's the 'Most Magical Place on Earth', where millions of families flock every year to have their dreams spun from fantasy to reality.</p> <p>But for thousands living in the shadow of Disney World near Kissimmee, Florida, life is far from a fairytale, and more like a nightmare of homelessness and uncertainty.</p> <p>Along the busy US Route 192 that runs past the direction of the theme park, dozens of brightly-painted motels line the highway and desperate families and single residents who are falling through the cracks.</p> <p>Tented encampments are springing up nearby, while in historic downtown Kissimmee people are living in their cars or in bus shelters.</p> <p>Among them are the newly homeless locals, hit by the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic that saw them lose their modest apartments when their finances couldn't recover from job losses.</p> <p>Others are newcomers that moved to the Sunshine State believing their lives would improve in an area dominated by Disney's wealthy economy, only to find rocketing rent prices beyond their reach.</p> <p>They are young, old, white, black, Latino. Some have worked hard all their long lives and are stunned to find themselves facing life on the street. There is little discrimination in this dilemma.</p> <p>Within eight miles of the gates to the Magic Kingdom, Disney's corporate stamp begins to make its mark on US Route 192.</p> <p>The motels all have their signs encased in identical purple and gold supports, while bus stops feature extravagant shelters with the same Disney color scheme.</p> <p>They offer basic sanctuary, but for the majority of people it is only temporary. Most motels enforce a two-week maximum stay to avoid any claim of residency. And they are no longer particularly cheap – charging between \$1,200 and \$1,400 a month.</p> <p>However, they are still below median asking rents in the Orlando-metro area which have risen 57 per cent to an average \$2,295, according to apartment listing website Dwellly.</p>

Opposite Medieval Times – a castle-themed venue featuring dining and displays of jousting on horses – sits Paradise Inn. It's unlikely to receive many tourists; its major clientele are the desperate or disadvantaged.

Windows are broken, exterior hallways need a coat of paint, laundry appliances are in the open public areas.

Forklift truck operator Demarco Jones, 40, moved into a room there with his five young children and girlfriend Monica Garcia, 32, after losing his two-bedroom apartment in Winter Park, 25 miles away.

'My hours were cut in Covid and that forced me into debt,' he told DailyMail.com. 'I got badly behind with my bills and when my hours returned I had so much to catch up on it was almost impossible.

I had to take responsibility. I had a nice apartment, three bedrooms, two bathrooms and I paid \$1,300 a month. But I had to leave, no choice. That was two months ago.

'It was hard to leave but I just had to pack up and go with the five kids,' Jones added. 'My youngest is three and my oldest is 12.

'We caught an Uber and went to one place, but it turned out they didn't have rooms for us. So we tried some place and got in for a while.

'But we did a lot of hopping around, most places only let you stay two weeks. But when the manager here saw I had five children he agreed to let us remain longer.

'This is obviously not how I want to live. It's not what I want for my kids. My plan is to get out. I've got some momentum, I'm going to try for an apartment.'

Along the freeway at a Wawa gas station, 50-year-old Steve Rumph sits sweltering in his beat-up 2006 Lincoln Towncar on a 96F degree day in May.

The car, crammed with Steve's belongings; shirts on hangers, pillows, other assorted clothes, bags, is now his home.

Rumph told us he is a former marathon runner, has a degree in criminal justice and did a year at law school before leaving for personal reasons. He also suffered from a serious leg injury which makes mobility difficult.

He said he moved back down to Florida from New Hampshire last year with his girlfriend and stayed in the Paradise Inn, paying \$1,200 a month.

However, he said a coat containing all his identity documents and \$1,600 was stolen from the vehicle when he went to pay for gas at the Wawa where we found him parked around the back.

'I had no choice. It was live in the car or nothing. I'd lost everything,' he said, talking with resignation and a sense of acceptance. 'My girlfriend didn't want to live in the Lincoln so she ended up going to a homeless camp.

'I had stayed at the Paradise Inn but I was disgusted with my room. There were cockroaches everywhere, mold on the bed and large stains on the mattress. There were even large gaps under the door where lizards or spiders or anything could come in during the night.

'They gave me what they called the cheap rate of \$1,200. But it was a waste of money. I feel comfortable in my car. It's a nicer place to be than a motel like that.'

Rumph lives off disability benefits but has also resorted to a drastic way to make ends meet.

'I'm starting to sell my plasma,' he said. 'I get \$800 a month for four donations. I hope I can keep going with that.'

In the parking lot of Hart Memorial Central Library in downtown Kissimmee, a battered blue Chevrolet Impala sits under the shade of a tree. One of the wheels is a donut spare. The Chevy is home to a family of four.

Battling the afternoon heat inside the car is Breanna Major, 23, husband Derrick Spencer and their children Kryson, four and Ke-Aula, three.

The couple moved to the area in April from living with family in Albany, Georgia. They previously had apartment in Surprise, Arizona, which they lost in their struggle to keep on top of their finances.

'We came to Kissimmee to have a fresh start. To see what it had to offer,' said Breanna. 'Trying to spot different places that would be suitable for a family. Trying to find great schools to put the kids in, find great jobs.'

'We've been trying to find an apartment, but not having a stable income has put that on the back burner.'

'We've had to live for today and wait for what happens tomorrow. Our priority is trying to make sure we have food and be able to clean ourselves, to be able to function like a normal person. The little money we do make is already gone.'

Spencer works as a landscaper and Major said she is due to graduate her online course in healthcare management from Ultimate Medical Academy in Tampa within weeks.

'We've been in this parking lot for about a month now, under the same tree for shade. Although our car is now really working right now,' she said.

'Our radiator is leaking, so it's running hot and overheating and then the battery is consistently dying. It has AC but we don't use it because that means using gas.'

'So we are going to sit here in the parking lot and try to figure out a game plan to help save money a little bit faster.'

'You can think to yourself, what am I going to be today, am I going to be depressed? OK, I'm living in a car but am I going to say OK, today is another opportunity? You never know what opportunity you're going to get that will help little by little.'

The family uses the facilities in the library to keep clean and when that closes for the night there is a bathroom in the nearby Lakefront Park.

'Other than that, we use what we can, wipes, bottles of water – however you can keep yourself in a healthy state,' said Major.

'Because we have no AC, we keep the windows open a few inches. At night sometimes we sleep with the doors open and then wake up in the middle of the night to check the surroundings to make sure no one is coming to mess with us. It is a risk we are taking, it is a safety thing. It's that or be super-hot.'

Asked how they feed the family, Major said: 'Pretty much we get everything from the gas station, pre-cooked or sandwiches. It's been a while since we had a decent home cooked meal. You get used to gas station food. And water - you have hydrate a lot out here because of the sun.'

'Honestly, the kids don't understand the situation.'



Spencer said: 'It's really tough living in the car, really tough, especially as a man. You have kids looking up to you. It's a struggle every day but I manage to keep my head up high because every day is another day.'

'It kills me when the kids look at me and say, are we going in a house yet? I have to tell them that we have to wait until we manage to get enough money.'

'We're pretty much in the shadow of Disney World and the kids want to go there. I have to keep telling them, we'll go there one day, we'll go there one day. And I want to make that vision possible for them because they have got a huge imagination.'

Shortly after DailyMail.com interviewed the couple, they moved to a different location.

Navy veteran Clifford Morley, 64, and wife Genny, 53, tried to live in Orlando International Airport when they found themselves facing life on the streets after owning a two-bedroom house.

But unlike Tom Hanks's 2004 comedy film *The Terminal* – in which his character is stuck living at New York's JFK airport - there were no amusing moments for the couple.

They moved from Toledo, Ohio, to the Orlando area in April for Genny's health after she suffered a stroke and wanted to be in warmer weather.

The couple said they booked accommodation for the first few weeks in the area but lost the room and \$700 deposit after their Amtrak journey hit severe delays and they arrived days late.

'So we went into a hotel for a week and that cost \$600,' said Clifford. 'Then we had very little money and we went to the airport thinking we could hang out there.'

'We went to the first floor, by the car rental counters. We had to make it look like we were taking a trip somewhere, but after two days we got thrown out.'

'That left us trying somewhere, without much luck and a few days later we returned to the airport. We were kicked out a few times, yet managed to get at least 10 days there.'

The couple headed to downtown Kissimmee and began sleeping at bus stops. It was a terrifying shock to their system.

Clifford was stationed in Hawaii for four years with the Navy and spent 13 years in the reserves as a boatswain's mate helping drive ships. He worked at General Mills in Buffalo, New York and Toledo before 16 years at the Jeep plant in Ohio.

'We were terrified, really frightened for our safety,' he said. 'We cried. Because living on the street, it's not fun. We were devastated to be homeless and living in a bus stop. It's frightening, we felt like we were never going to make it. But we couldn't give up.'

Genny said: 'It was terrible sleeping on a bench, I was so sore.'

The couple said they had given their small house to their family before leaving for Florida. 'We thought about going home and our kids would take us in, but how long could you stay there?,' said Clifford.

Eventually, Clifford sought help at Osceola Christian Ministry Center which introduced him to Barbie Austria who runs her own support group, Kissimmee Poinciana Homeless Outreach.

'No one his age should die on the street, especially veterans,' said told DailyMail.com. 'Clifford is a perfect example of the forgotten Americans who are facing homelessness here right now.'

Austria, 61, has dedicated the past 18 years to helping the area's homeless and estimates 'thousands' live in temporary motel accommodation, on the streets and in tented encampments within a few miles of Disney's gates.

'Really, there are thousands. I'm not exaggerating,' she told DailyMail.com. 'We have some that just stay in the woods, and people in the streets and then people – so many of them families - in motels.

'But the motels are now expensive, so they will probably stay a week and then they are back out in their car or on the road.'

She continued: 'During the pandemic, when there was the rent freeze, people just stopped paying their rents and it ruined their credit.

'So their credit rating dropped dramatically and that is something that counts against them because you must have a credit score of 640 or higher to rent.

'The criteria to get into housing is so difficult. You have to make three times the income of your rent. You have to go through criminal background. No bankruptcies allowed. If you are in debt collection you are not allowed. Often they can find no way back.

'All the motels requires is an ID card and money.'

Disney employees are among battling to get by in temporary motel rooms, Austria revealed. 'But they will not talk to the media, they are too afraid of losing their jobs,' she added.

'I know one man, who is one of the characters on stage, who has no permanent home.'

Austria is a 9/11 survivor who was on the 5th floor of the World Trade Center's North Tower when lead hijacker Mohamed Atta crashed American Airlines Flight 11 into it.

She was working as a law compliance officer but by 2003 was defined as 'suicidal' by her doctor. The following year she left for Florida and her mission to help the homeless.

Austria helps feed people at the Osceola center and on the streets. Additionally, for the past three years she has taken on a building in downtown Kissimmee providing 13 rooms for homeless people. They are fully furnished and the building has cooking facilities.

It is there that Clifford and Genny are now living, rescued from the streets.

A fellow resident is Albert Parramore, 64, who helps run the facility. 'I've been homeless most of my life,' he said. 'But I've been here since Barbie opened it and it's a new beginning for me and everyone else who comes here.'

Austria is blunt about the dangers facing people on the streets amid the touristy areas surrounding Disney.

'Taking women off the streets is crucial, because they are raped, they are beaten,' she said. 'Most of them are too afraid to press charges because the guy will just retaliate.

'I'm currently helping out a woman in her 30s she was stabbed six times in the back and left for dead. The guy almost gouged an eye out.'

In contrast to that horrific story, Austria points out a less dramatic but no less significant illustration of the homelessness gripping the area.

	<p>Walking with her along Kissimmee's elegant Broadway, visited by a steady stream of visitors enjoying the coffee shops and businesses housed in historic buildings, she reveals: 'This area is very popular for those without home.</p> <p>'Many people won't immediately notice it, but there are a lot of homeless here trying to look like tourists, so they can just hang out, pass the time, stay out of the sun. Or just feel normal.'</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Russia advances into Sievierodonetsk</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/russians-advance-largest-city-donbas-ukrainian-hands-sievierodonetsk">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/russians-advance-largest-city-donbas-ukrainian-hands-sievierodonetsk</a>
GIST	<p>Russian tanks and troops have begun advancing into Sievierodonetsk, the largest city in Donbas still held by <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, bringing fighting street by street as the Kremlin's forces continue to grind forwards in the east of the country.</p> <p>Witnesses said Russian tanks were advancing towards the centre of the city one blast at a time, razing everything in their path that remains <a href="#">after intense shelling</a> that Ukrainian authorities have said has led to conditions on the ground reminiscent of Mariupol.</p> <p>"Unfortunately we have disappointing news: the enemy is moving into the city," the Luhansk regional governor, Serhiy Gaidai, told Ukrainian national television on Monday.</p> <p>The Russian army "use the same tactics over and over again. They shell for several hours – for three, four, five hours – in a row and then attack. Those who attack die. Then the shelling and attack follow again, and so on until they break through somewhere."</p> <p>The battle for Sievierodonetsk, which lies on the eastern bank of the Siverskyi Donets River, about 90 miles south of the Russian border, is in the spotlight as Russia makes slow but solid gains in the industrial Donbas, which comprises the self-proclaimed republics in Luhansk and Donetsk.</p> <p>Witnesses said the city was being bombed "200 times an hour" as Russian forces try to cut off reinforcement lines and surround its remaining Ukrainian defenders.</p> <p>The city's mayor, Oleksandr Striuk, confirmed in a telephone interview with the Associated Press that Russian troops had "advanced a few blocks towards the city centre". He said Ukrainian forces were fighting to push the Russians out in street fighting and that the 12,000-13,000 civilians left in the city were sheltering in basements and bunkers to escape relentless bombardment.</p> <p>Local authorities estimated that 1,500 civilians had already died in Russian attacks on Sievierodonetsk, including from a lack of medicines. Striuk said the city had "been completely ruined" and that the number of victims was "rising every hour, but we are unable to count the dead and the wounded amid the street fighting".</p> <p>Relentless Russian artillery barrages have destroyed critical infrastructure and damaged 90% of the buildings, and power and communications have been largely cut to a city that was once home to 100,000 people.</p> <p>A French journalist was killed after an armoured humanitarian evacuation vehicle in which he was travelling was hit by shrapnel from a Russian shell in Sievierodonetsk. According to local authorities, shrapnel pierced the vehicle's armour, killing Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff as he travelled alongside civilians forced to flee Russian bombs. The evacuation was called off after the attack.</p> <p>Having failed to take the national capital, Kyiv, in the early phase of the war, Russia is seeking to consolidate its grip on Donbas, large parts of which are already controlled by Moscow-backed separatists.</p>

It has concentrated huge firepower on a small area – in contrast to the earlier phase of the conflict, when its forces were often spread thinly – bludgeoning towns and cities with artillery and airstrikes.

“They don’t care how many lives they will have to pay for this,” said Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, in his latest national address, referring to Russian forces in the region.

Russia has also stepped up its efforts to take the neighbouring city of Lysychansk, where, according to Gaidai, a Russian shell fell on a residential building over the weekend, killing a child. The two cities sit on either side of the strategically important Siverskyi Donetsk River.

According to Ukrainian officials, Lysychansk is still under Ukrainian control, while the main road into the two cities has been shelled, but not blocked. The last remaining access and evacuation route, leading south-west towards the town of Bakhmut, remains under Ukrainian control.

The Ukrainian defence ministry spokesman Oleksandr Motuzyanyk said Ukrainian troops were doing all they could to prevent Russian forces from completely encircling Sievierodonetsk, which if it fell could help Moscow to consolidate its grip on the Donbas – large parts of which were controlled by Moscow-backed separatists before the 24 February invasion.

“The liberation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, recognised by the Russian Federation as independent states, is an unconditional priority,” Sergei Lavrov, the Russian foreign minister, told the French TV channel TF1, adding that other Ukrainian territories should decide their future on their own.

Russian forces are also regrouping to resume their offensive further west in the direction of the Sloviansk region of eastern Ukraine, Motuzyanyk said.

“In Sloviansk, the enemy is regrouping to resume attacks in the direction of Izyum-Barvinkove and Izyum-Sloviansk,” he told a briefing.

In the south of the country, the Russian-appointed mayor of occupied Melitopol said two civilians had been wounded by an explosion that she blamed on Ukraine. No one has claimed responsibility for the explosion, which Halyna Danylchenko denounced as a “cynical terror attack by the Kyiv regime” in remarks broadcast by Russian state television.

Meanwhile, the fate of the the last group of Ukrainian soldiers holed up in the smashed Azovstal steelworks in Mariupol, who surrendered on 20 May, hangs by a thread.

According to Yuri Sirovatko, a pro-Moscow separatist official and justice minister of the self-proclaimed Donetsk people’s republic (DNR) in eastern Ukraine, the Ukrainian fighters may face the death penalty.

“The court will make a decision about them,” Sirovatko was quoted as saying by the RIA Novosti news agency. “For such crimes we have the highest form of punishment in the DNR – the death penalty.

“All the prisoners of war are on the territory of the DNR,” he said, adding that there were about 2,300 soldiers from Azovstal among them.

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HEADLINE	05/30 EU partial embargo Russia oil imports
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/eu-nears-compromise-agreement-for-partial-ban-on-russian-oil">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/eu-nears-compromise-agreement-for-partial-ban-on-russian-oil</a>
GIST	The European Union has agreed to an embargo on most Russian oil imports after late-night talks at a summit in Brussels.

The president of the European Council, Charles Michel, hailed the deal as a “remarkable achievement”, after tweeting on Monday night that sanctions will immediately impact 75% of Russian oil imports, “cutting a huge source of financing for its war machine”.

Ursula von der Leyen, the president of the European Commission, said the ban “will effectively cut around 90% of oil imports from Russia to the EU by the end of the year” because Germany and Poland had committed to renounce deliveries via a pipeline to their territory.

Michel added that the package also included removing access to Swift payments for Russia’s largest bank, Sberbank; banning three more Russian state-owned broadcasters; and further sanctions against “individuals responsible for war crimes in Ukraine”.

Von der Leyen called the agreement on a sixth sanctions package was “an important step forward” and said the bloc had agreed a “massive investment in renewable energy” in order to compensate for the diversifying away from Russian oil.

The EU’s foreign policy chief, Josep Borrell, later tweeted: “A landmark decision to cripple Putin’s war machine. Our unity is our strength.”

Volodymyr Zelenskiy had earlier appealed to EU leaders to show unity against Vladimir Putin. At a summit in Brussels, EU leaders had been attempting to find a way to placate the Hungarian prime minister, Viktor Orbán, who has been holding up a deal on the latest sanctions against Putin’s war machine.

Under a compromise plan that was discussed at the summit, Russian oil transported through the Soviet-era Druzhba pipeline for Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia would be exempt from the EU embargo.

In a press conference on Monday night, Michel acknowledged talk of a lack of European unity, adding: “I think that more than ever it is important to show that we are able to be strong, that we are able to be firm, that we are able to be tough in order to defend our values and our interests.”

Michel said the European Council and G7 was also ready to grant Ukraine €9bn to aid its post-war reconstruction and immediate liquidity needs. However, von der Leyen warned that Ukraine needed €5bn a month just to maintain basic services and “... to give Ukraine a fair chance to rise from the ashes”.

The EU had stalled over its latest sanctions against Russia for nearly four weeks since the Von der Leyen, proposed a complete ban on Russian oil by the end of the year.

Arriving at the summit, Orbán said “the pipeline solution is not bad” but insisted his country needed guarantees it could get oil from other sources if there was an “accident” at the Druzhba pipeline, which runs through war-torn Ukraine. In typically pugnacious style, Orbán attacked the commission for what he called its “irresponsible behaviour” and blamed it for creating a “difficult situation”.

The bloc has come under increasing criticism for slow progress in agreeing the latest sanctions package, the sixth, including from Zelenskiy, who addressed the gathering on Monday by video link.

Ukraine’s president called on leaders to end their disputes, which “only encourage Russia to put more pressure on you”, according to an extract of his speech published on Telegram.

The German chancellor, Olaf Scholz, said earlier he was confident there was a “good solution” on the oil embargo. Germany, along with Poland, has pledged to phase out Russian oil by the end of the year. Officials close to the talks say the decision of these two large economies to forgo oil from the northern leg of the Druzhba pipeline means the EU oil embargo would cover 93% of Russian oil supply by the end of the year.

As yet there is no end date on the exemption for the southern leg of Druzhba, covering Hungary, Slovakia and the Czech Republic, landlocked countries that are heavily dependent on Russian oil.

Latvia's prime minister, Krišjānis Kariņš, said he intended to warn his fellow leaders not to get "bogged down" in details. "The big picture is that we have to starve Russia, Moscow, of the funds to continue the war," he said. "If each European country only thinks about itself then we will never move forward."

Italy, the Baltic states, the Netherlands, Belgium and other countries that import oil on tankers had initial reservations about an exemption for pipeline oil that would give an advantage to those countries that can continue to import cheaper Russian oil. But there was growing willingness to accept an imbalance on the EU's internal market to secure agreement on sanctions.

Beyond sanctions, EU leaders are expected to approve €9bn in emergency support for Ukraine, although there is no decision yet on whether the funds will be low-interest loans or non-repayable grants.

Ukraine will need hundreds of billions to rebuild destroyed schools, hospitals, residential buildings and infrastructure. The European Commission has proposed a jointly managed reconstruction body to be organised by Ukraine and the EU, with contributions from international institutions.

As EU talks went on, it emerged Russia would cut off gas supplies to the Netherlands on Tuesday, in the latest escalation of the energy payments row with the west. The Dutch-backed trader GasTerra revealed the move after the company refused to meet the Kremlin's demand of paying Gazprom in roubles. About 15% of Dutch gas comes from Russia.

Some EU leaders are already talking about a seventh round of Russia sanctions targeting gas. But some argue the EU rushed too quickly into an oil embargo. "We talked about oil, under pressure from [the] Baltics and Poland before having done our homework," a senior EU diplomat said. "Under the pressure of this war we have maybe taken some steps too soon and we are now facing the consequences."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 US ambassador to Ukraine arrives in Kyiv</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/new-us-ambassador-ukraine-arrives-kyiv-symbolic-move-bridget-brink">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/new-us-ambassador-ukraine-arrives-kyiv-symbolic-move-bridget-brink</a>
GIST	<p>The new US ambassador to <a href="#">Ukraine</a> has arrived in Kyiv, the Guardian understands, a symbolic move after the US withdrew all diplomats from the country before the Russian invasion in February.</p> <p>A career diplomat who served as US ambassador to Slovakia until recently, Bridget Brink was nominated by President Joe Biden in late April and confirmed unanimously by the US Senate on 18 May.</p> <p>Brink confirmed her arrival in Kyiv with a tweet noting that she had visited the foreign ministry to present her credentials. "Our first priority is to help Ukraine defend itself," she <a href="#">wrote</a>.</p> <p>The US embassy evacuated all family members and non-essential staff in January and moved operations to Lviv in western Ukraine in mid-February. Immediately before the Russian invasion, the diplomats moved again, to Rzeszów in Poland.</p> <p>At the time, the Americans were criticised in some quarters for their departure, with widespread scepticism inside Ukraine and in other European capitals over the apocalyptic warnings coming from US and British intelligence that Russia was preparing for full-scale war.</p> <p>In the end, almost all western diplomats left Kyiv, either before or immediately after Russia launched its invasion.</p> <p>Since the Russian army was pushed away from the region around Kyiv at the end of March, small teams of diplomats have been slowly returning. The British ambassador <a href="#">arrived at the end of April</a>. The US embassy restarted limited operations in Kyiv two weeks ago.</p>



The US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, called the reopening a “momentous step”, in a statement after the American flag was raised at the embassy on 18 May. The skeleton US diplomatic presence that has returned to Kyiv is mainly locked down at the embassy, a large compound in the suburbs.

Last week, the Wall Street Journal [reported](#) the Pentagon was considering deploying special forces operatives to guard the embassy.

When Brink presents her credentials to Zelenskiy it will mark the first time the US has had a full-fledged ambassador to Ukraine in three years, after the departure of [Marie Yovanovitch](#) in 2019, who was recalled by Donald Trump and became embroiled in the scandal over Trump associates attempting to pressure Zelenskiy to investigate the activities of Biden’s son in Ukraine.

During the buildup to Russia’s invasion, the US embassy was headed by a chargé d’affaires, Kristina Kvien.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Sri Lanka runs out of medicine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/people-are-going-to-die-crisis-hit-sri-lanka-runs-out-of-medicine">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/people-are-going-to-die-crisis-hit-sri-lanka-runs-out-of-medicine</a>
GIST	<p>Chandrapala Weerasuriya can’t remember when he last took his medication. The 67-year-old retired businessman, living in Sri Lanka’s Gampaha district, has always relied on a drug to keep at bay his hereditary nervous condition, which makes him dizzy and unable to walk.</p> <p>But since his prescription recently ran out, he cannot get another supply. The drug is simply not available in Sri Lanka any more.</p> <p>“I am afraid that I might become paralysed because there is no one to care for us,” he said fretfully. “My wife and I do everything alone. We split the household chores and manage it between ourselves. My wife has a knee problem and she can barely walk.”</p> <p>Sri Lanka’s financial crisis, its worst since independence, is swiftly becoming an alarming health crisis. The government’s coffers have fallen to their lowest levels on record and last week the country was forced to default on its international loans for the first time in its history. Without crucial foreign currency, Sri Lanka has been unable to import the essentials: food, fuel – and medicine.</p> <p>Sri Lanka imports more than 80% of its medical supplies. Now almost 200 medical items are in shortage, including 76 essential, life-saving drugs, from blood-thinners for heart attack and stroke patients to antibiotics, rabies vaccines and cancer chemotherapy drugs. Essential surgical equipment and anaesthesia is running out so fast that the decision was made this week for only emergency surgeries, mostly heart and cancer patients, to go ahead. All routine surgeries – anything from hernias to swollen appendixes – have been put on hold. Some government hospitals have been instructed to only admit emergency patients.</p> <p>“Ultimately, people are definitely going to die,” said a doctor in Colombo who had been told not to speak to the media.</p> <p>She described how the hospital was so low on certain drugs they had to instruct families of patients to go out to pharmacies and try to buy it themselves. “There have been incidents where the family members have gone around looking for drugs and by the time they’ve come back with the drug, it’s been too late and the patient has died,” she said.</p> <p>The doctor said the shortages were getting worse. “I’m worried about pregnant mothers because soon I don’t know whether we will have enough drugs to perform cesarian sections,” she said.</p>

Cancer drugs, which are notoriously expensive to import, have been particularly badly hit by shortages in recent weeks, and the responsibility to source them has fallen on the heads of oncologists themselves. They have been putting out global appeals for donations, and writing letters to private supporters, organisations and governments, to ensure cancer treatments are not delayed.

Dr Buddhika Somawardana, an oncologist at Colombo's largest cancer hospital, described the "great stress" he and other doctors were under as essential cancer drugs began to run out over a month ago or stopped being available at all.

"One of the drugs we give patients undergoing chemotherapy, which boosts their blood count so they aren't liable to serious infections, is not available any more," he said. "So far, we managed to get donation of 80,000 vials. But that will not last very long."

He added: "Somehow, thanks to donations, we have mostly been managing without any huge issues. But we had to postpone some chemotherapy, which may have detrimental effects on the cancer outcome."

Somawardana said the crisis was placing a huge "financial and psychological burden" on cancer patients, who were having to source and pay vast sums for their own medicines to continue their treatment, previously free and easily accessibly in hospitals under Sri Lanka's lauded universal healthcare system.

Cancer doctors too were feeling the pressure of having to be the ones both to appeal for global drug donations, as well as treat their patients. "I didn't know how long we will be able to go on like this," he said.

Ruvaiz Haniffa, a doctor in Colombo, expressed his frustration that doctors had "seen this coming as early as January" but little had been done by authorities to set up backup plans to ensure no medicines ran short, even as the country's foreign reserves began to deplete to worryingly low levels.

"We are facing great ethical dilemmas as doctors," said Haniffa. "We used to have a very efficient health system. But at the moment, it has become ineffective. More people will die, which is not acceptable."

He said his patients were being forced to find their own drugs and pay prices over 40% higher, if they could find them at all. Haniffa said many of his patients were having to choose between medicine or paying for the school tuition for their children or fuel to take them to work.

Haniffa said he feared for the long-term impacts on the life expectancy of Sri Lankans. "With the kidney disease and the diabetes and the hypertension we are not treating now, it causes long term damage," he said. "So in five years, we will see strokes go up, heart attacks go up, neurological problems go up, cancers go up."

With the newly appointed prime minister, Ranil Wickremesinghe, warning recently that the situation would "only get worse" and that Sri Lankans are facing tough months ahead, those without medicines said they faced an uncertain future. On Sunday, India delivered 25 tonnes of medical supplies to the country while France donated some essential equipment, but most working in the healthcare system say Sri Lanka can not rely on donations for ever.

Among those riddled with anxiety was Sushantha Weerasuriya, 42, who has struggled to get hold of his epilepsy medicine, travelling long distances to track a few pills down. Even when he manages to find the medicines, they have become almost impossible for him to afford, totalling 10,000 rupees (£22) in May.

But as soon as he stops taking the medication, he begins to have regular seizures, which cause him to lose consciousness and being unable to work.

	<p>“If I am without it for five days, then the condition will return and continue non-stop, which I really fear,” he said. “I am the primary breadwinner of my family and I have to support my wife and four-year-old daughter. But when the condition comes, I cannot work. If the medication completely stops then my family’s livelihood is in danger,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Shanghai prepares to end Covid lockdown</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/shanghai-starts-to-dismantle-fences-as-covid-lockdown-due-to-end">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/shanghai-starts-to-dismantle-fences-as-covid-lockdown-due-to-end</a>
GIST	<p>Shanghai authorities have begun dismantling fences around housing compounds and ripping police tape off public squares and buildings, to the relief of the city’s 25 million residents, before a painful two-month lockdown is lifted at midnight.</p> <p>On Monday evening, some of the people allowed out of their compounds for brief walks took advantage of suspended traffic to congregate for a beer and ice cream on deserted streets, but there was a sense of wariness and anxiety among residents.</p> <p>Most will be stuck indoors again until midnight, as they have been for the past two months under a ruthlessly enforced lockdown that has caused income losses, stress and despair to millions struggling to access food or get emergency healthcare.</p> <p>The prolonged isolation has fuelled public anger and rare protests inside Shanghai and battered the city’s manufacturing and export-heavy economy, disrupting supply chains in China and around the world, and slowing international trade.</p> <p>Life is set to return to something more like normal from Wednesday, when the passes issued by residential buildings for people to go out for a few hours will be scrapped, public transport will resume and residents can go back to work.</p> <p>“Now that I’m going back to work so suddenly, I feel a little nervous,” said resident Joseph Mak, who works in education. “It’s hard to believe it’s actually happening.”</p> <p>The easing of curbs applies only to those in low-risk areas, or about 22.5 million people. Residents in those areas will still have to wear masks and are discouraged from gathering. Dining inside restaurants remains banned. Shops can operate at 75% capacity. Gyms will reopen later.</p> <p>Residents will have to get Covid tests every 72 hours to take public transport and enter public venues. Tough quarantine is still in store for anyone testing positive and their close contacts.</p> <p>China is alone among major countries enforcing an uncompromising “zero Covid” policy that aims to eradicate all outbreaks as soon as they occur at just about any cost. It remains to be seen if frequent testing can keep Omicron under control.</p> <p>Todd Pearson, managing director of Camel Hospitality Group, which operates eight restaurants, four bars and three gyms in Shanghai and neighbouring Suzhou, is wary.</p> <p>His restaurants are only allowed to do deliveries, which amount for about 5% of revenue, not enough to pay salaries and rent. At least from midnight his workers who have been sleeping in the restaurants, stuck there due to the strict lockdown rules, can finally go home.</p> <p>“I’m hopeful that they will rush things along quickly to restart the economy,” Pearson said. “I just hope it’s not at the cost of more outbreaks. I’m not sure many businesses or the people could handle much more.”</p>

	<p>Economic activity in China has somewhat recovered in May from a dismal April as Covid curbs in major manufacturing hubs were gradually relaxed, although movement controls still depressed demand and restrained production.</p> <p>Factory activity was at a three-month high in May, but contracted from a year earlier.</p> <p>On Tuesday the British Chamber of Commerce released its annual position paper, warning that Covid restrictions and uncertainty about the future was having a negative impact on British companies in China. A survey of more than 600 members found 74% were “seriously impacted” by Covid zero policies, with almost 50% delaying planning investments.</p> <p>“All we can expect is more uncertainty, disruption and potentially more lockdowns”, as China continues with its zero-Covid targets, said the chamber’s chair, Julian MacCormac.</p> <p>“There is a real nervousness and concern that something like [Shanghai] could happen again in the current environment.”</p> <p>The report found 43% of member companies were facing challenges including hiring foreign talent, and 23% had a net decrease in foreign staff. It said 41% were anticipating their staff will leave within a year.</p> <p>Shanghai reported 31 cases for 30 May, down from 67 a day earlier, all within controlled areas.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 China eases lockdowns, oil prices climb</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-prices-hit-two-month-high-as-china-eases-lockdowns-11653933068?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/oil-prices-hit-two-month-high-as-china-eases-lockdowns-11653933068?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>Oil prices rose to their highest level in more than two months Monday, driven by China’s tentative <a href="#">emergence from Covid-19 shutdowns</a>.</p> <p>A renewed push by European Union leaders to strike a deal that would ban most Russian oil imports added to the upward momentum on prices. Heading into the summit in Brussels, German Chancellor Olaf Scholz said he was confident the bloc would find a consensus over a ban—though <a href="#">other European leaders were more cautious</a> about the chances of an imminent agreement.</p> <p>The twin prospect of rising oil demand in Asia and curbed supplies out of Russia pushed benchmark Brent-crude prices for July delivery up 1.9% to \$121.67 a barrel. That is their highest level since early March. Since then, <a href="#">falling fuel consumption in China</a> has tamed global demand and pulled crude prices down from their 2022 highs of about \$139 a barrel.</p> <p>“If you throw in the lifting of the restrictions in Shanghai...all of a sudden the demand side of the equation looks more attractive than it did a week ago,” said Tamas Varga, an analyst at brokerage PVM Oil Associates.</p> <p>Paul Horsnell, head of commodities research at <a href="#">Standard Chartered</a>, said Covid-19 shutdowns had reduced Chinese oil demand by about 1.2 million barrels a day in May. With lockdowns set to wane, most of that is likely to return, lifting Chinese consumption close to 16 million barrels a day, Mr. Horsnell added. The world consumes about 100 million barrels a day.</p> <p>Brent’s rise puts oil prices on track to increase 11.3% in May, which would be their biggest one-month advance since January, the month before Russia invaded Ukraine. Trading in West Texas Intermediate futures, the U.S. crude benchmark, was closed for Memorial Day on Monday.</p> <p>The rally in oil prices <a href="#">threatens to fan inflation in the U.S.</a> and elsewhere, maintaining the pressure on central banks to raise interest rates. Gasoline and diesel prices have rocketed to record highs in the U.S. recent weeks, just as motorists prepare for the summer driving season.</p>

[Average U.S. gas prices](#) are at an all-time high of \$4.619 a gallon, according to automotive club AAA, up from \$3.045 a year ago.

Inflation figures published in Europe on Monday showed consumer-price growth accelerating in Germany to its fastest pace since 1973 this month. That was powered in part by a 38% annual rise in energy prices.

The main factor behind the rise in road-fuel prices, analysts and energy executives say, is a lack of spare capacity at refiners that convert crude oil into gasoline and other refined products. Rising crude prices typically feed into higher prices at the pump within weeks, however, as refiners pass on their main input cost to consumers.

China's emergence from shutdowns stands to raise demand for oil at a time when supplies of some fuels are running low globally. Shanghai Vice Mayor Wu Qing said over the weekend that the authorities will loosen the conditions under which companies are able to resume work this week.

The city's government also laid out a 50-point plan for accelerating the economic recovery. The measures include tax cuts for businesses and subsidies for purchases of electric vehicles.

An EU ban on Russian oil, subject of protracted negotiations in recent weeks, would further strain global supplies. After tweaks designed to win over Hungary, which buys most of its crude via a pipeline from Russia and has opposed a ban, the plans now center on stopping imports by boat. The sanctions, as proposed at Monday's summit, would allow Russian oil to keep flowing to Europe through pipes.

Even with an exemption on pipeline imports, an EU ban would amount to a significant blow to Russia's ability to cash in on its prize commodity. As of 2020, about three quarters of the 2.8 million barrels in crude Russia exported to Europe each day arrived on boats, according to Bruegel, a think tank.

Germany, which imports Russian oil through the northern branch of the Druzhba pipeline, has committed to replacing that crude with alternative supplies. For Russia, that leaves Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia, which import just 250,000 barrels a day of oil through the southern branch of the pipe, according to the International Energy Agency.

Kristine Petrosyan, an IEA analyst, said Russia would struggle to divert all the oil that had flowed to Europe on boats to buyers in Asia. "I don't think they can reallocate everything," she said, adding that the voyage from Russia's Baltic-sea ports to China takes about 60 days, much longer than the runs to European refineries.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Summer worker shortage; closed again</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/summer-worker-shortage-means-pools-camps-closed-11653918501?mod=hp_lead_pos9">https://www.wsj.com/articles/summer-worker-shortage-means-pools-camps-closed-11653918501?mod=hp_lead_pos9</a>
GIST	<p>Many Americans hoped this would be <a href="#">the first normal summer</a> after two years of Covid-19 disruptions. A chronic labor shortage <a href="#">means it probably won't be</a>.</p> <p>In Phoenix, less than half of the public pools are opening because the city can't hire enough lifeguards, despite offering a \$2,500 incentive payment. Trolley lines in coastal Maine that service beaches are shutting down for the summer due to a dearth of drivers. Across the country, restaurants in tourist destinations are operating on limited hours because they don't have enough staff to stay open longer.</p> <p>The shortages push up <a href="#">labor costs, adding to inflationary pressure</a> on items including airfares and beach menus. That could hold back consumer spending, the engine of the U.S. economy.</p> <p>The scarcity of available workers first emerged a year ago as Covid-19 vaccinations became available, businesses reopened and the economy rebounded. Many economists said more workers would join the</p>

labor force and fill open roles as Covid-19 fears eased and pandemic-related government stimulus faded. Now, shortages are not only persisting, in some cases they are deepening, at a crucial time for many businesses that depend on a summer boom.

Two key factors are at play. First, employer demand for workers remains red-hot, [with job openings double the number of unemployed individuals looking for work](#). Second, [workers continue to switch jobs](#) and quit lower-wage industries including restaurants at high rates, leaving businesses scrambling to fill vacant positions, economists say.

Polar Cave Ice Cream Parlour in Mashpee, Mass., a Cape Cod town, is struggling to find workers to scoop its dozens of ice cream flavors, including the shop's popular Death By Chocolate.

"We knew we were going to have a busy summer. But no employer that I know—and I know lots of them—could've dreamt that it's like, 'what, no one is applying?'" said Mark Lawrence, owner of Polar Cave. "When you think it can't get worse, it just gets worse."

On a warm weekend in mid-May, customers waited in line for roughly 45 minutes because Mr. Lawrence didn't have enough workers to call in for additional help. "Which is scary for what's to follow," he said, referring to his peak summer season, which starts in June. "If it was like this now, what's it going to be like when school is out and people are coming for their summer vacations?"

The summer economy has a rhythm of its own. With roughly 30 million workers and creating about 10% of U.S. gross domestic product, it runs from June to August when most Americans take breaks from work and school. It's especially dependent on sectors such as restaurants, hotels and summer camps that are having a particularly hard time filling jobs.

This year's expected shortages are likely to cause frustration for consumers confronted with limited services, waiting lists and higher prices. At the same time, workers, especially those with limited skills who traditionally fill summer jobs, are likely to have multiple options and receive higher pay.

Brewster Fish House in Cape Cod, typically open seven days a week during the summer, is struggling to stay open for five due to labor shortages, the restaurant's owner Vernon Smith said.

Demand is strong, he said, for the restaurant's cioppinos, lobster bisque and fish and chips, in part because many second homeowners have been working remotely from Cape Cod during the pandemic. But there aren't enough workers to fill roles such as line cooks due to limited affordable housing in the area, Mr. Smith said. And many of the people who respond to the restaurant's job advertisements don't follow up or disappear, a [practice known as ghosting](#).

"They say they're going to come for an interview and then they just never show up," he said.

Restaurants and bars have brought back many of the jobs lost earlier in the pandemic. But [employment in the sector is still 6.4% below February 2020](#). Meanwhile, demand is hovering near prepandemic levels, according to OpenTable restaurant reservation trends.

Foreign-worker interest in U.S. summer jobs is higher than in previous years, according to jobs site Indeed. That could help compensate for the lack of domestic interest this year. The share of U.S.-based job searches for seasonal roles on April 10 was down 16.9% and 27.6% from the same date in 2021 and 2019, respectively, according to Indeed's analysis.

The Biden administration this spring said it would [make an additional 35,000 seasonal-worker visas available](#) to employers ahead of the summer hiring season, on top of 66,000 visas allotted each year. Those numbers are dwarfed by [the 11.5 million unfilled jobs in the U.S.](#), although not all of those are seasonal.



[SeaWorld Entertainment](#) Inc. and [American Hotel Income Properties REIT](#), which owns a number of Holiday Inn and Embassy Suites hotels in the U.S., on earnings calls in May said that they were hiring more international workers due to the challenging labor market.

Even though seasonal work is traditionally on the lower end of the wage scale, pay is rising as employers compete for workers. Heading into the summer months, annual wages for workers at restaurants, hotels, golf courses, fitness centers and summer camps were all increasing at a faster rate than they were last summer.

Some employers who raised wages are still finding it difficult to staff up. Officials in Calvert County, Md., raised the pay rate for lifeguards to \$14.46 per hour from \$13.32, but still didn't get enough applications. Candidates didn't show up for interviews or they declined positions, according to Calvert County Parks & Recreation Director Shannon Nazzari. As a result, the local pool won't open to the public this summer in Huntingtown, Md., a town near the Chesapeake Bay an hour's drive south of Baltimore.

That came as a disappointment to Lindsay Galyon, a stay-at-home mother who lives near the pool and whose 3-year-old son is learning to swim.

"We were really looking forward this summer to spending more time in the pool," the 30-year-old said. She called it frustrating, since visiting the pool is an easy activity with her toddler.

Ms. Galyon said there are less appealing alternatives. There's a nearby water park with entrance prices she finds too high; a public pool located a roughly 30-minute drive across the county; and a public beach on the Chesapeake Bay with reduced opening times this season.

Job postings for amusement park and arcade roles were up 54% in April, on average, from a year earlier, and postings were 15% higher for positions at hotels as well as RV parks and summer camps, according to jobs site [ZipRecruiter](#).

Andy Pritikin, owner of Liberty Lake Day Camp in Mansfield Township, N.J., said before the pandemic, 85% of his advertising budget went toward attracting campers and 15% went toward attracting staff.

"That's completely switched this year," he said. Demand for spots for campers is "off the charts," he said.

The camp is competing for young workers with employers in retail, amusement parks, warehouse distribution and food-delivery apps, which are all boosting wages faster than the camp. Liberty Lake is trying to find workers by turning to the traditional places it uses to advertise for campers, such as roadside billboards and social media.

At hotels overall, employment was down 20.7% in March compared with the month before the pandemic hit.

"Hotels hit pause on hiring during [the wave of the pandemic variant] Omicron and were unable to keep up as demand surged back in February and March," said Sourav Ghosh, chief financial officer at [Host Hotels & Resorts](#) Inc., during an earnings call in early May. The company owns more than 70 luxury hotels in the U.S. including a number of Ritz-Carlton and [Marriott](#) hotels. "While our hotels continue to fill open roles, a lag between demand and staffing levels still exists," he said.

There were [about 4.5 million more people who were out of the labor force](#), meaning they weren't working or looking for a job, in April of this year compared with February 2020. That is a slight improvement from a year ago but still signals employers will likely struggle to find workers for months to come.

As many adults left jobs in retail, tourism and hospitality during the pandemic, [teenage workers have become particularly essential](#) to employers. Teens are now working at levels last seen in 2008, thanks in part to the allure of higher wages.

Alvani Generillo, 15 years old, has a sea of job options. Ms. Generillo, a Calvert County resident, is considering summer jobs at an events venue or at a bubble-tea cafe in Prince Frederick, Md., to supplement babysitting income. “I want to work at a place where I’m going to enjoy working, and I enjoy boba,” she said, referring to bubble tea.

Her mother, Valentina Vasquez, said one potential obstacle to her daughter working this summer is transportation. Ms. Vasquez mostly works from home but occasionally has to commute to her job as a deputy clerk at a court in Washington, D.C.

“Now prices are really high for gas, if the job is really far and she doesn’t get paid much, it could be a waste of time and also gas,” the 43-year-old said, adding that she thinks the limited bus routes and schedules in her area play a big role in whether teenagers can work.

Even if every teenager could work, they would only be able to fill so much of the labor gap. Teen workers account for about 4% of the overall labor force.

Mr. Lawrence of Polar Cave is spending more money for supplies, including ice cream ingredients, bowls and spoons, because of price increases. As a result of the higher costs for labor and materials, Mr. Lawrence has raised ice cream prices by roughly 20% compared with a year ago.

Though the shop has stockpiled many items, it continues to face product delays. Its brownie supplier recently shut down for several days because of an egg shortage, Mr. Lawrence said.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Military suicides: more lives than combat</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-wa/2022/05/30/military-suicide-women-sexual-assault-ptsd/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/dc-md-wa/2022/05/30/military-suicide-women-sexual-assault-ptsd/</a>
GIST	<p>When she was growing up, Memorial Day meant a trip to the Honor Wall in the center of Deana Martorella Orellana’s hometown, where the names of Charleroi, Pa., men who died in the world’s battlefields are etched in black granite.</p> <p>Her family is making that trip without her this year.</p> <p>She died with inspirational notes stuffed in her pockets. That March morning in 2016, she had gone to Veterans Affairs and asked for counseling.</p> <p>She couldn’t talk to her family about how her deployment to Afghanistan changed her — and yes, it changed her, they all said — serving on a female engagement team there.</p> <p>“She talked to one of her sisters about it and said she could take everything except for the children,” said Laurie Martorella, Deana’s mom. “Something about the children really hit her.”</p> <p>And keeping that inside haunted her.</p> <p>“Nobody talks about mental health,” Laurie said. “If you do, you’re weak, you’re on medication, it might affect my future earnings, there might be a stigma.”</p> <p>Deana shot herself at age 28 with a .45-caliber handgun, joining the growing number of military women who end their own lives.</p> <p>Memorial Day is about these warriors, too.</p> <p>Suicide has been the main killer of U.S. personnel since the Sept. 11 attacks. More than 30,000 of them have died by their own hands since, during a period that saw about 7,000 service members die in combat or training exercises, according to <a href="#">a project</a> from Brown University.</p>

Suicide in the military community is at its highest rate since 1938, according to a Department of Defense [report](#) released last month.

Increasingly, those killed are women.

[In 2020](#), they accounted for 7 percent of military suicides — up from 4 percent [a decade earlier](#), according to Department of Defense numbers. About 1 in 6 servicemembers is female.

The reports break down the deaths by gender, age and branch, but they hardly address the dramatic increase among women.

Deana's story was featured in 22 Too Many, a project honoring the estimated 22 military suicides that happen every day.

Last month, [three sailors](#) on the Naval carrier USS George Washington stationed in Norfolk killed themselves in less than a week. One of them was electrician [Natasha Huffman](#).

The very nature of the war business does little to discourage this mental health calamity.

“Women who are in these male-dominated settings in the military are trained to be strong, to push through,” said [Melissa Dichter](#), associate professor in the School of Social Work at Temple University who published a report this year about women's suicide in the military.

So when women are in mental health crisis, especially PTSD, they go back to the building blocks of basic training, and how they talked themselves out of letting anyone believe they didn't belong there. The answer to everything, [they learned](#), was to work harder. So they pushed through.

When female veterans try to find support in the civilian world, their stories of war and bodies and bombs aren't the stuff of bonding, Dichter found. Support groups, from official meetings at VA to the unofficial ones at the VFW, are testosterone fests.

Dichter [analyzed](#) more than a million anonymized calls to the Veteran Crisis Line for her report. About 53 percent of the women who called the line were at risk of suicide, compared to 41 percent of men, her [study](#) found.

Many had stories of PTSD and combat trauma. But Dichter found one key difference: While men were more likely to be struggling with substance abuse and addiction, most women called about an intimate partner or sexual violence.

That was what ultimately pushed Taniki Richard to try to kill herself: the trauma of combat and a sexual assault that she never reported.

“When I came back from Iraq, I started having nightmares of being raped, and then it being on the aircraft,” the Chesapeake, Va., retired Marine and mom said in [a video](#) on Yahoo.

“One day, it just became too much. I was under so much extreme stress and pain that I just wanted it to end,” she said, so she crashed a car into a light pole outside a Marine Corps Air Station in North Carolina, “attempting to end my life.”

Richard survived. And she went into counseling, understanding that her nightmares weren't only about the night in Iraq when her helicopter was under fire. She realized that among her fellow warriors — the family that the military became for her — was her rapist. She now works with the Wounded Warrior Project and tells her story in speeches and podcasts to help other women who survived assault.

Women in the military are dealing with PTSD, isolation and an experience so common that it has its own military acronym — MST, Military Sexual Trauma.

It's a uniquely sinister form of abuse. It's not like an assault by a stranger or a wicked date. Fellow warriors are supposed to be the ones who have your back in battle. The unit is about supporting each other. Imagine the danger and insecurity any soldier would feel when they are attacked by their own comrades. It's a common theme among the women calling for help.

"In intimate partner sexual violence women often feel stuck, it's hard to find a way out, to see a way out," said Dichter, whose research has included interviewing sexual assault survivors in the military who struggle with the duality of attackers being colleagues.

Her work is showing the military how far-reaching and scarring their epidemic of sexual assault really is.

And how important it is for women leaving the military to find support in the civilian world, whether it's for MTA, PTSD or both.

That was the platform that Deshauna Barber stood on when she swapped her combat boots for stilettos and became Miss USA 2016.

"I want to make sure they have what they need when they return from deployment," she [said](#) after her win. "I have lost a soldier to PTSD, to suicide, so I have been directly affected by it."

After taking off the crown, Barber continued that work as CEO of the Service Women's Action Network, a powerful group based in D.C. that lobbies on behalf of military women and connects them to support groups.

Deana's family wants to keep telling her story, so women like their athletic, energetic, compassionate daughter know they are not alone.

They tell her story, say her name, they created a [scholarship](#) in her honor.

And this week, they'll go to that black, granite wall in her Pennsylvania hometown. Deana's grandfather's name is there, she once stood in front of it, in her Marine dress uniform.

Now, hers is too.

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HEADLINE	05/30 France under fire for chaos at soccer final
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/world/europe/ucl-game-delay-france.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/world/europe/ucl-game-delay-france.html</a>
GIST	<p>PARIS — French authorities faced a firestorm of criticism on Monday following the <a href="#">chaotic scenes of confusion and violence</a> at the Champions league final between Real Madrid and Liverpool near Paris over the weekend, tarnishing France's image as a capable host ahead of major sporting events like the 2024 Summer Olympics.</p> <p>But the French government has acknowledged few failings, doubling down instead on its assertion that the chaos had been caused primarily by tens of thousands of Liverpool fans who converged on the Stade de France, the stadium north of Paris where the game was held, with fake tickets or no tickets at all.</p> <p>Gérald Darmanin, the French interior minister, said at a news conference on Monday that the "root cause" of the chaos was a "massive, industrial and organized fraud of fake tickets" — roughly 30,000 to 40,000, by his account, a figure he said was supported by UEFA, European soccer's governing body.</p> <p>"Obviously there is nothing to be proud of with what we saw Saturday evening," Mr. Darmanin said, but he praised French police for preventing people from being injured or crushed to death.</p>

Mr. Darmanin dismissed questions over France's preparedness for the Summer Games and the 2023 Rugby World Cup, which the country is also hosting, as "disproportionate," laying the blame for Saturday's events squarely at British feet.

"Clearly there is only in soccer — and in particular, within soccer, with certain British clubs — that this kind of situation occurs," he said — even though [French soccer has faced rising violence itself](#), including on Sunday, when angry fans invaded the field of [a game between Auxerre and Saint-Étienne](#).

Politicians in Britain and France have assailed French authorities for their handling of the situation and called for an investigation into crowd control and security failings at the stadium.

Many supporters [complained](#) about the aggressive use of tear gas and pepper spray by French police ahead of the game, and then over being targeted by pickpockets near the Stade de France after the game ended.

For France, the optics were not good.

"Yesterday, 400 million people watched live on television what I consider to be a humiliation for our country," Michel Savin, a right-wing senator who chairs a parliamentary committee on sporting events, said in a [statement](#) on Sunday.

Stéphane Troussel, the head of the local council in Seine-Saint-Denis, where the Stade de France is located and where many Olympic events will be held in 2024, said Monday that he was "very angry."

"It isn't the first time that there are big events in this stadium, because the Stade de France has been in Saint-Denis for 24 years," Mr. Troussel [told Franceinfo](#). "It's the third Champions League final that is organized there. I've never seen such disorganization."

The final, which was supposed to be played in St. Petersburg but was [moved to Paris after Russia's invasion of Ukraine](#), is the biggest annual event on the European sports calendar — the continent's equivalent of the Super Bowl — and was an opportunity for France to showcase its organizational skills for large-scale sporting events.

But it was clear several hours before the game started on Saturday that something had gone wrong.

Crowds surrounding the area outside the part of the stadium reserved for Liverpool fans, a crush of bodies in the club's signature red, quickly overwhelmed staff responsible for checking tickets. But inside the Stade de France, thousands of seats in the Liverpool section were still empty as kickoff approached.

The start of the game was repeatedly delayed, and eventually kicked off 36 minutes late, and French riot police deployed outside the stadium were faced with a buildup of largely peaceful but increasingly frustrated crowds, many of whom said they had tickets to enter.

Making matters worse was the presence of local youths trying to make it into the stadium without tickets. Hundreds tried to scale fences — with many succeeding, as seen in social media posts. The police's response appeared to have been to spray tear gas into the crowd, angering and scaring the waiting Liverpool fans.

The police then took the unprecedented step of locking down the Stade de France, with a UEFA official telling people trying to leave the stadium at halftime that it was safer to remain inside. That advice was not offered when the game ended, however, and several fans of both teams spoke of being harassed and mugged in the areas surrounding the stadium.

The scene prompted a barrage of attacks against the French government from the French far-right, which jumped on the chaos with its usual talking points on immigration and crime. Marine Le Pen, the leader of the far-right National Rally party, said at a news conference that "hordes of criminals had descended on the Stade de France to rob and loot supporters."

Across the English Channel, French authorities' attempts to deflect blame onto Liverpool supporters only added to [a long list of contentious issues in the rocky Franco-British relationship of recent years](#). Through a spokesman, [Prime Minister Boris Johnson said](#) he was "hugely disappointed" by the treatment of Liverpool fans, who are especially marked by the [Hillsborough tragedy of 1989](#), when 96 fans were crushed to death in a stadium.

Joanne Anderson, the mayor of Liverpool, [writing on Twitter Sunday](#), said she was "disgusted by appalling management" and "brutal treatment" of the Liverpool fans by French police. She added that she had sent a letter to several officials, including Mr. Macron, for an explanation.

"Shameful to pin blame on fans," Ms. Anderson said.

Liam Byrne, a British lawmaker who was in Paris to support Liverpool, expressed concern for what he described as the "narrative of lies" that fans were to blame for the problems.

"I've never ever seen a more hostile environment," Mr. Byrne told the broadcaster Sky Sports. "From the outset the police, the security, everything about it was absolutely awful."

The Merseyside Police, which serves Liverpool and which had deployed officers in France "in an observatory and advisory capacity," [said in a statement](#) that "the vast majority of fans behaved in an exemplary manner, arriving at turnstiles early and queuing as directed."

After a crisis meeting at the French sports ministry that included local officials, UEFA and police authorities, Mr. Darmanin, the interior minister, and Amélie Oudéa-Castéra, the sports minister, expressed regrets that an estimated 2,700 ticket-bearing fans had not been able to enter the stadium to watch the game.

They also acknowledged that the flow of Liverpool fans approaching the stadium could have been better handled, and that a handful of police officers had not used proper guidelines when using tear gas.

But they said that ticket fraud by Liverpool supporters was mostly to blame. According to Mr. Darmanin, 70 percent of tickets checked by stadium staff at initial checkpoints were fake.

"We had prepared a lot for hooliganism," Mr. Darmanin said, but "a little less" for the confusion that occurred on Saturday.

It is not uncommon for fake tickets to circulate before major sporting events, and organizers typically have a plan to deal with those, including setting up checkpoints further away from the stadium. But many critics of France's response say that the number of fakes alleged by French authorities was implausible.

Ronan Evain, the executive director of Football Supporters Europe, an umbrella organization of fan groups, who attended the game, said there were some supporters who had tried to enter with fake tickets or fake accreditation but that those numbers were "marginal."

"They are trying to deflect the blame on Liverpool fans," he said. "I think they are choosing between a domestic political crisis and a diplomatic crisis with the UK and they have chosen the second option."

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HEADLINE	05/30 Russia FM denies reports of Putin illness
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/30/russian-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov-again-denie/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/30/russian-foreign-minister-sergey-lavrov-again-denie/</a> <a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/rumours-continue-about-putins-health-with-little-to-back-them-up">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/rumours-continue-about-putins-health-with-little-to-back-them-up</a>
GIST	Russia's top diplomat has again been forced to address persistent reports in the West that President Vladimir Putin is suffering from an undisclosed illness, denying the 69-year-old Mr. Putin faces any



serious health issues and accusing those who question his stamina and judgment of having ulterior motives.

Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov, in an interview late Sunday with French television network TF1, once again insisted that Mr. Putin is not sick.

“President Vladimir Putin makes public appearances on a daily basis,” Mr. Lavrov said when asked directly about Mr. Putin’s status. “You can see him on TV screens, read and listen to his speeches. I don’t think that a sane person can suspect any signs of an illness or ailment in this man.”

“I’ll leave it on the conscience of those who disseminate such rumors despite daily opportunities for everyone to see how he and others look like,” he added.

Discussions about Mr. Putin’s health are virtually taboo inside Russia, but outside analysts say his face has appeared puffy and his gait unsteady in recent videos and there appeared to be a suspicious tremor in at least one of his hands.

Mr. Putin has been largely isolated from major gatherings for much of the COVID-19 pandemic, meeting with Western visitors and even close advisers before and after his Feb. 24 decision to invade Ukraine from comically long distances across huge rooms.

Kremlin officials have repeatedly tried to shoot down past reports that Mr. Putin is dealing with a major health issue, variously diagnosed as cancer, chronic back pain or Parkinson’s disease.

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The rumours have spanned the gamut: Vladimir Putin is suffering from cancer or Parkinson’s disease, say unconfirmed and unverifiable reports, the Russian leader has survived a coup attempt or, as some tabloids think, he is [already dead](#) and has been replaced by a body double.

Photographs of Putin meeting top aides are inspected in microscopic detail: is he gripping the table in pain during a meeting with defence minister Sergei Shoigu in late April? Is his puffy face a sign of steroid use, as former foreign secretary Lord Owen claimed in March?

As Russia’s war in [Ukraine](#) enters its fourth month, reports suggest that Russia’s leader may be ill. But that may be just wishful thinking for Putin’s many critics, who appear ready to embrace conspiracy theories of divine vengeance or palace coups for his unrelenting assault on Ukraine.

In an interview on Sunday, Russia’s foreign minister, Sergei Lavrov, was forced to deny speculation that Putin was ill or dying, as the diplomat continued to defend Russia’s assault on Ukraine.

“President [Vladimir Putin](#) appears in public every day,” Lavrov said in an interview with French television. “You can watch him on screens, read and listen to his performances. I don’t think that sane people can see signs of some kind of illness or poor health.”

He said he left reports of Putin’s poor health “on the conscience of those who spread such rumours”.

On Monday, Putin spoke with the Turkish president, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, and chaired a meeting of his security council. Both meetings were held remotely, as the Kremlin leader continues his coronavirus isolation. Aides and [world leaders who have met Putin](#) but have not quarantined have been forced to sit at a long table, dozens of metres away from the president.

Last week, Ukrainian military intelligence chief Kyrylo Budanov said he believed that Putin was both seriously ill and that he had survived a recent coup attempt, saying only that the supposed attackers came from the Caucasus region.

“He has several serious illnesses, one of which is cancer,” Budanov told Ukrainian outlet Ukrainskaya Pravda. “But it’s not worth hoping that Putin will die tomorrow.” He also claimed that a coup “will eventually lead to the change of leadership of the Russian Federation. This process has already been launched.”

A former Soviet spy has claimed that Putin has Parkinson’s disease, while New Lines Magazine [claimed](#) to have obtained a recording of an oligarch saying Putin is “very ill with blood cancer”. Neither of the reports have been confirmed.

One report from the Proekt investigative website said that Putin is believed to have thyroid cancer or another disease.

The report was based on leaked travel documents that showed that Putin had received regular visits from an oncologist and from two otolaryngologists, whom the outlet said would often make a first diagnosis of a thyroid condition. The Kremlin has not confirmed any reports about Putin being sick, saying that the Russian leader is in excellent health. Dmitri Peskov, a Kremlin spokesman, called it a “fabrication and untruth”.

Rumours of Putin suffering from illness and injury have stretched back for more than two decades and are, to a certain degree, the fault of the Kremlin for closely guarding information about Putin’s health and whereabouts.

Since taking power, Putin has been portrayed as an active sportsman to contrast with the image of Boris Yeltsin as a heavy drinker whose poor health made him an even poorer leader.

But Putin has disappeared for weeks at a time in the past, amid reports of sporting injuries from ice hockey and judo. He recently told an interviewer that he had fallen off a horse early in his presidency as well.

The Kremlin has regularly used pre-filmed reports, often called “conserves”, to make it appear that Putin is in meetings when he is in fact unaccounted for. One extended absence took place during the coronavirus outbreak, when Putin claimed to be in Moscow while reports said he was in Sochi, occasionally appearing in an [identical office](#) as if in Moscow.

Since the beginning of the war, some reports have focused specifically on Putin’s pained body language, suggesting that he may have some back problems. A bulky frame has been explained alternatively as the president wearing a back corset or some kind of body armour when in public.

Those rumours gained steam when Putin [noticeably grimaced](#) during a meeting with Shoigu in late April. Putin will turn 70 in October and the focus on his health is likely to continue as he ages. But Budanov said he believed that Putin “still has at least a few years left. Whether we like it or not, that’s the truth.”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 China continues air incursions into Taiwan</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/taiwan-scrambles-jets-after-china-makes-largest-incursion-into-air-defence-zone-since-january">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/taiwan-scrambles-jets-after-china-makes-largest-incursion-into-air-defence-zone-since-january</a>
GIST	<p>China has made the second largest incursion into Taiwan’s air defence zone this year with Taipei reporting 30 jets entering the area, including more than 20 fighters.</p> <p>Taiwan’s defence ministry said late on Monday it had scrambled its own aircraft and deployed air defence missile systems to monitor the latest Chinese activity.</p> <p>In recent years, Beijing has begun sending large sorties into Taiwan’s defence zone to signal dissatisfaction, and to keep Taipei’s ageing fighter fleet regularly stressed.</p>

Self-ruled democratic Taiwan lives under the constant threat of invasion by [China](#), which views the island as its territory and has vowed to one day seize it, by force if necessary.

The US last week accused Beijing of raising tensions over the island, with secretary of state Antony Blinken specifically mentioning aircraft incursions as an example of “increasingly provocative rhetoric and activity”.

Blinken’s remarks came after US president Joe Biden appeared to break decades of US policy when in response to a question on a visit to Japan [he said Washington would defend Taiwan militarily](#) if it was attacked by China.

But the White House has since insisted its policy of “strategic ambiguity” over whether or not it would intervene has not changed.

Monday’s incursion was the largest since 23 January, [when 39 planes entered the air defence identification zone](#), or ADIZ.

The ADIZ is not the same as Taiwan’s territorial airspace but includes a far greater area that overlaps with part of China’s own air defence identification zone and even includes some of the mainland.

A flight map provided by the Taiwanese defence ministry showed the planes entered the south-western corner of the ADIZ before they looping back out again.

Last year, Taiwan recorded 969 incursions by Chinese warplanes into its ADIZ, according to an AFP database – more than double the roughly 380 carried out in 2020.

The highest number of aircraft China has sent in a single day was 56 on 4 October 2021. That month saw a record 196 incursions, mostly around China’s annual national day celebrations.

So far in 2022 Taiwan has reported 465 incursions, a near 50% increase on the same period last year. The sheer number of sorties has put the air force under immense pressure, and it has suffered a string of fatal accidents in recent years.

On Tuesday local media reported that a pilot had died after crashing a trainer jet in southern Kaohsiung. It is not the first deadly crash this year – in January one of Taiwan’s most advanced fighter jets, an F-16V, [plunged into the sea](#).

Last March, Taiwan grounded all military aircraft after a pilot was killed and another went missing when their fighters collided mid-air in the third fatal crash in less than six months.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Day 97 of the Russia invasion</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-97-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/31/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-97-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• EU leaders have <a href="#">backed a partial embargo on Russian oil</a> after late-night talks at a summit in Brussels. The sanctions will immediately impact 75% of Russian oil imports with the aim to ban 90% of all Russian oil imported to Europe by the end of the year, officials said. The president of the European Council, Charles Michel, hailed the deal as a “remarkable achievement” that would place “maximum pressure on Russia to end the war”. The compromise excludes the Druzhba pipeline from the oil embargo and exempts deliveries arriving in Europe by pipeline, after Hungarian prime minister Viktor Orbán warned halting supplies would <a href="#">wreck his country’s economy</a>.</li><li>• The latest sanctions package also includes removing access to Swift payments for Russia’s largest bank, Sberbank; banning three more Russian state-owned broadcasters; and further sanctions against “individuals responsible for war crimes in Ukraine”.</li></ul>

- **European Council president Charles Michel addressed speculation of disunity within the EU** in the days leading up to the agreement. “In the recent hours and recent days there was speculation about a lack of European unity,” he told reporters. “We do not underestimate all the difficulties. We know that we needed a few weeks before we were able to take a decision.”
- **Ukraine’s president Volodymyr Zelenskiy earlier lamented the delay in EU leaders imposing heavier sanctions against Vladimir Putin.** “The pause in agreeing on new sanctions in Europe has been too long,” he [said](#).
- **The European Council added it is ready to grant Ukraine €9bn to aid in its postwar reconstruction.** The Council will “continue helping Ukraine with its immediate liquidity needs, together with the G7” European Council President Charles Michel said late on Monday night. EU Commission President Ursula von der Leyen warned that Ukraine needed €5bn a month just to maintain basic services and “... to give Ukraine a fair chance to rise from the ashes”.
- **Zelenskiy claims that Russia is blocking the export of 22m tons of grain from Ukraine’s ports and warned it posed a threat of famine.** “Russia’s blockade of our exports is destabilising the situation on a global scale,” he said in his latest national [address](#). Zelenskiy added that Russian forces “have already stolen at least half a million tons of grain” and “are now looking for ways to illegally sell it somewhere”.
- **The situation in Donbas remains “extremely difficult”,** Zelenskiy said, adding that Russian troops shelled Kharkiv again on Monday. “The territory of our Sumy region was also shelled across the border between Ukraine and Russia,” he said.
- **Russian tanks and troops [began advancing into Sievierodonetsk](#),** the largest city in Donbas still held by [Ukraine](#), bringing fighting to the streets on Monday. The regional governor, Serhiy Gaidai, described “heavy battles” and said the fighting was “very fierce”.
- **Russian president Vladimir Putin spoke with Turkish president Recep Tayyip Erdoğan,** saying if sanctions were lifted, then Russia could “export significant volumes of fertilisers and agricultural products”.
- **Joe Biden has said the [US will not supply Ukraine with long-range rockets](#) capable of reaching Russia.** Ukraine has asked for multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) with a range of about 300km (185 miles) to offset Moscow’s increasingly effective use of long-range artillery.
- **France is set to boost military aid to Ukraine.** Foreign minister Catherine Colonna said France will “continue to reinforce arms deliveries” while visiting Kyiv on Monday.
- **Belarus will conduct military mobilisation exercises in June and July in the Gomel region,** state news agency [BelTA](#) reports.
- **Russia will stop supplying gas to the Netherlands as of tomorrow after the government-backed trader GasTerra refused to pay supplier Gazprom in roubles.** About 44% of Dutch energy usage is based on gas, but only about 15% of Dutch gas comes from Russia, according to government figures.
- **The Georgian breakaway region of South Ossetia has scrapped plans to hold a referendum on joining [Russia](#) which had been scheduled for 17 July.** The Moscow-controlled enclave’s president Alan Gagloev warned of the “uncertainty of the legal consequences of the issue submitted to a referendum,” according to a report from Agence France-Presse.
- **French journalist, Frédéric Leclerc-Imhoff, 32, has been killed** after an armoured evacuation vehicle in which he was travelling was [hit by shrapnel from a Russian shell](#) in the city of Sievierodonetsk in eastern [Ukraine](#). Ukrainian and French authorities have said. France has called for an investigation into the reporter’s death as Zelenskiy offered his “sincere condolences” to his colleagues and family.
- **The first alleged case of rape by a Russian soldier has been sent to court,** the prosecutor general of Ukraine said. The serviceman will be tried for the alleged murder of the victim’s husband and “sexual violence against his wife”, Iryna Venediktova said.
- **The Eurovision song contest winners Kalush Orchestra [auctioned off their trophy to raise money for the Ukrainian army](#).** The band, whose song Stefania was triumphant in Turin earlier this month, said they raised \$900,000 (£713,000) by auctioning off the glass microphone and a further \$370,000 by raffling off the pink bucket hat frontman Oleh Psiuk wore during the performance.

HEADLINE	05/30 US: no long-range missiles for Ukraine
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/biden-will-not-supply-ukraine-with-long-range-rockets-that-can-hit-russia">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/biden-will-not-supply-ukraine-with-long-range-rockets-that-can-hit-russia</a>
GIST	<p>Joe Biden has said the US will not supply Ukraine with rockets that can reach into Russia, in an attempt to ease tensions with Moscow over the potential deployment of long-range missiles with a range of about 185 miles.</p> <p>The White House has been weighing up pleas from Ukraine – which is <a href="#">losing ground in the battle for Donbas</a> – for multiple-launch rocket systems (MLRS) to offset Moscow’s increasingly effective use of long-range artillery, amid Russian warnings that doing so would cross a red line.</p> <p>“We are not going to send to <a href="#">Ukraine</a> rocket systems that can strike into Russia,” Biden told reporters on Monday after arriving back at the White House after a weekend in Delaware.</p> <p>The US-made MLRS comes in many different variants, which in turn use a variety of munitions. The longest range can fire missiles up to 185 miles away, but others use rockets with shorter ranges of 20 to 40 miles.</p> <p>The precise meaning of Biden’s remark on Monday was unclear, but it was consistent with other <a href="#">briefings from the weekend</a> that the White House was willing to provide MLRS as long as it withheld the longest-range missiles.</p> <p>That was repeated on Monday. One senior US official said: “MLRS is under consideration, but nothing is on the table with long-range strike capabilities.”</p> <p>The former Russian president Dmitry Medvedev described Biden’s remarks as “reasonable” and warned that if his country’s cities had been struck, then Russian forces would “have struck at the centres of these criminal decisions”.</p> <p>Ukraine appears close to losing the city of Sievierodonetsk, the easternmost city it had held in the Donbas region, amid a relentless Russian artillery barrage that has destroyed large parts of a city that had a prewar population of 100,000.</p> <p>Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskiy, acknowledged late on Sunday that “the entire critical infrastructure” and “more than two-thirds of the city’s housing stock” had been “completely destroyed”, as he asked for “more modern weapons to defend our land, to defend our people”.</p> <p>Nick Reynolds, a land warfare specialist with the Rusi thinktank, said: “The disparity in artillery capability is a major factor allowing the Russian ground forces to continue pushing forwards.”</p> <p>Russian firepower was preventing Ukraine’s forces from massing for counterattacks, the analyst said, adding that MLRS could help Kyiv by “disrupting all kinds of activity in enemy rear areas”.</p> <p>Last week, Ukraine’s ministry of defence released a video of what it said was the shelling of its positions by Russian TOS-1A flamethrower rockets in the Donetsk area. “Ukraine is ready to strike back. To do this, we need Nato-style MLRS. Immediately,” the <a href="#">ministry’s Twitter feed said</a>.</p> <p>The M270 tracked MLRS, and its wheeled equivalent, the M142 high mobility artillery rocket system (HIMARS), have a far greater range than anything Ukraine can deploy at the moment. Using them could allow Kyiv to hit at Russian targets from further back, although it could expose more of its hinterland to retaliation.</p> <p>Sign up to First Edition, our free daily newsletter – every weekday morning at 7am BST</p> <p>Ukraine began the war with artillery such as Soviet-standard howitzers with a range of about 10 miles, before the US agreed to send 90 M777 Nato-standard artillery pieces to Ukraine. Depending on the shells used, <a href="#">M777s can have a range of up to 25 miles</a>.</p>

	<p>Other Nato members may follow the US lead. Ukraine has also been pressing the UK to supply some of its own M270s, with some sources complaining that Britain has been dragging its feet. The British M270 <a href="#">has a range of 52 miles</a>, although 44 of the army's stock are being upgraded to 93 miles.</p> <p>Last Friday Boris Johnson, the UK prime minister, said MLRS would enable the Ukrainians "to defend themselves against this very brutal Russian artillery, and that's where the world needs to go". His remarks, a public acknowledgment of Ukraine's request, fuelling expectations an announcement could come within days.</p> <p>Briefings from the US have suggested an announcement could come later this week, after Monday's Memorial Day holiday.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Young crucial caregivers 'exist in shadows'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/young-caregivers-exist-in-the-shadows-offer-crucial-help/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/health/young-caregivers-exist-in-the-shadows-offer-crucial-help/</a>
GIST	<p>PLANO, Texas (AP) — Ronan Kotiya leans over his father, fingers wrapped around a plastic tube he's about to slide from a tracheostomy hole in dad's neck.</p> <p>"3, 2, 1, go," the 11-year-old says as he removes the tube. His mom slips a padded neck brace on her husband and lifts him into a sitting position on their bed.</p> <p>Ronan's 9-year-old brother, Keaton, waits nearby, ready to connect their dad, Rupesh Kotiya, to a portable ventilator.</p> <p>"Ronan, do you want to suction daddy's mouth and then get ready to go?" Siobhan Pandya asks after her son steers dad's power wheelchair into the living room of the family's Plano, Texas, home.</p> <p>"Thanks buddy, good job," a robotic voice crackles from a tablet Kotiya uses to speak.</p> <p>So begins another weekend for the brothers — two Harry Potter fans with mouths full of braces, a knack for building with Legos and some heavy caregiving responsibilities.</p> <p>Their 46-year-old father has Lou Gehrig's disease, a fatal illness that has taken his ability to speak and walk. A ventilator helps him breathe. He uses eye-tracking software on the tablet to say things, blinks to indicate yes or moves his mouth side to side for no.</p> <p>As many 10 million children in the U.S. may provide some form of care at home, according to researcher Melinda Kavanaugh. Some kids are the only caregivers patients have, while others fill in when visiting nurses or other help is not available.</p> <p>These children help cancer patients, military veterans, grandparents with heart disease or autistic siblings. They're often too young to drive, and their work frequently goes unnoticed outside the home.</p> <p>"They exist in the shadows," said Kavanaugh, an associate professor of social work at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee.</p> <p>Kavanaugh and other researchers say the number of young caregivers is growing, and they need support. Caregiving is a task that children like Ronan and Keaton take seriously and something that their mom hopes will shape them into empathetic, strong young men.</p> <p>But getting there first involves a daily struggle to balance being a kid with living in a very grown-up world.</p> <p>Ronan grabs a handful of toy cars and kneels on a clinic floor at Texas Neurology in Dallas.</p>



His opponent, a freckle-faced boy named Charlie, waits a few feet away, ready to smash cars together. First to tip over loses.

“Y’all are savages,” says Evie, a skinny 9-year-old prone to spontaneous dance.

The children have gathered in the clinic on a sunny Saturday afternoon to learn more about caring for people with Lou Gehrig’s disease, or amyotrophic lateral sclerosis. These seven children — ages 8 to 12 — help care for a parent or grandparent with ALS, an illness that destroys nerve cells in the brain and spinal cord that control muscle movement.

Kavanaugh lined up several specialists to teach as part of a program called YCare that she has taken to several cities. A dietitian showed the kids how to make food the right consistency so patients don’t choke. A respiratory therapist explained the important parts of a device that helps people cough to clear mucus.

In one training session, speech therapist Heather Gallas discusses eye tracking technology that allows patients to spell out words and communicate with a tablet.

She holds up a laminated letter board and asks the kids to try. Evie silently points to every letter in her name.

Then Keaton takes a turn.

S-U-C-T-I-O-N.

Gallas pauses, “Is that something your dad needs a lot?”

Keaton nods.

Aside from providing training, one of Kavanaugh’s main goals was to simply let the young caregivers meet. Loneliness is a problem, one that grew worse during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“A 10-year-old at school is not going to talk about toileting or bathing their parent, but they are going to talk about it here,” Kavanaugh said.

In the afternoon, the kids trade email addresses and phone numbers, and The ALS Association’s Texas chapter starts making plans for a pizza party reunion this summer.

Doctors diagnosed Rupesh Kotiya with ALS in October 2014, a month before his boys turned 4 and 2. Ronan and Keaton have no memories of him without the illness.

They started pitching in with care a few years ago, first by wiping away their dad’s tears or propping up his head during car rides.

Then they started helping Pandya move their father in and out of bed or onto the toilet. They pull down his shorts and underwear while she lifts him to the seat.

They also put on his socks and shoes, help change his shorts, crush medicines or mix mouthwash with water.

Pandya, a senior director with the skin care and cosmetics company Mary Kay, has daytime and evening caregivers for her husband during the week. But she has no paid assistance overnight or on the weekends, so the boys have had to step up.

“To be honest, they’re doing tasks some adults don’t want to do,” Pandya said.

Pandya tries to balance the boys' caregiving with activities that offer some normalcy. Keaton takes tennis lessons and coding classes. Ronan plays striker on a youth soccer team.

Soccer balls, frisbees and basketballs lay scattered around the Kotiyas' small suburban backyard.

Both boys play piano, and Keaton paints prolifically. Stacks of his work fill shelves in their upstairs playroom.

Ronan, who wrote a short book about his dad, sees his father's fight against ALS as a superhero battle. He and his brother are among the many weapons used.

Keaton shows his frustration sometimes, especially with the amount of care his dad needs.

"He's been having a few accidents these last few days," Keaton said. "One time he went three times that day, and I was really looking forward to doing something that day, but I couldn't do it because ... yeah."

In the end, Pandya sees the boys' caregiving as a positive. She hopes Ronan and Keaton eventually look back and recognize how much they gained by helping someone they love.

"If you're caring for somebody that ... has a clock ticking, then you don't want to take that time away," she said. "Being able to wipe their tears or wipe their mouth or hold their hand, those are some of the memories that they're going to cherish."

The boys know their dad is getting worse.

Keaton says it is getting harder for his dad to blink. He remembers one recent night when Rupesh slept for over 12 hours and then took a long nap the next afternoon.

"I'm like, should I be worried?" he said.

Frustration, devotion and heartbreak all swirl around in their still-developing brains.

Therapist Sarah Sutton recently had the boys draw up bucket lists of things they want to do with their dad.

Keaton shares a love of food with Rupesh, so he asked for a trip to Italy. The family found a more practical alternative: a drive to an Italian food market and restaurants in nearby Dallas.

Sutton has seen the boys regularly for a few years. She's been trying to get them to recognize and understand all the emotions hitting them so they don't keep everything bottled up.

When they visit, she also tries to give them a fun activity they can control. Play — kids being kids — is crucial for development.

"We play out conflict. We play out resolution. We play out the stories that are going on inside us," Sutton says.

During a recent visit, Sutton breaks out the board game Candy Land. She tells the boys that each colored card in the game will represent an emotion, and they get to decide which ones.

Then they draw cards with the idea of discussing whatever feeling comes up.

Sutton also tries to nudge the boys into talking about their dad. They deflect, focusing instead on a painting on her wall. Then the singer Rick Astley comes up.

Keaton pretends to be a therapist. "Do you have a girlfriend?" he asks.



“No, you’re an awful therapist,” Ronan replies.

Ronan only allows at one point that his dad is “doing good.”

Sutton draws double green in their game. That represents disgust or unfairness.

“I think it’s unfair that terrible things happen to people,” she says.

The boys avoid the bait. They eat Hershey’s Kisses. They trade scribbles on an Etch A Sketch. Someone farts. The session devolves into fits of giggles.

“Have you guys been laughing like this all day?” Sutton says. “Laughter without any anger or fighting is so wonderful.”

When the session ends, Sutton’s floor is strewn with candy wrappers.

The boys head for their mom’s waiting van so they can return home and set up a living room campout.

Pandya started letting Ronan and Keaton roll out sleeping bags on their living room rug each weekend during the pandemic. It began as a treat when they couldn’t go anywhere else.

Rupesh started using a ventilator just before the pandemic hit. The boys stayed home from school for 17 months as Pandya tried to keep everyone from catching the virus.

She also has an ulterior motive in allowing the campouts: Having the boys sleep next to their parents’ bedroom instead of upstairs in their shared room makes it easier to summon their help.

The boys may have to get trash bags and gloves if their dad has an accident during the night.

Before they set up camp, the boys change into pajamas, and the family settles in the living room to watch the kids’ show “Legends of the Hidden Temple.”

Ronan and Keaton curl up on a couch and loveseat while Pandya changes her husband’s shirt and pours medicine into his feeding tube. The ventilator hums.

The show ends, and Keaton takes his turn to steer dad back to the bedroom, where Pandya lifts him onto the mattress.

Keaton uses a long wand to suction saliva pooling in his dad’s mouth.

Ronan then holds his father on his side as Pandya straightens her husband’s shirt and shorts.

After that, the boy pats his dad softly on his back and lays him flat.

Pandya finishes getting her husband ready for bed while Ronan and Keaton scamper back to the living room.

There, they sprawl on top of sleeping bags, munching chips and candy as they squeeze in a little more TV before crawling inside to sleep.

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HEADLINE	05/30 For teen drivers ‘100 deadliest days’ start
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/the-100-deadliest-days-for-teen-drivers-teenage-young-driver-summer-summertime-memorial-day-start-labor-day-ends">https://komonews.com/news/local/the-100-deadliest-days-for-teen-drivers-teenage-young-driver-summer-summertime-memorial-day-start-labor-day-ends</a>

GIST	<p>Portland, ORE — Memorial Day marks the beginning of what transportation officials call the "100 Deadliest Days" for teen drivers.</p> <p>There were 2,400 teenagers killed in crashes in 2019, <a href="#">according to the CDC</a>.</p> <p>That's why starting Monday, officials are sounding the alarm for parents to talk to their kids about driving safe this summer season.</p> <p>"Life's not a video game. There's no do-over. When someone dies, you really die," said Russell Ceperich, father of 16-year-old Bianca Ceperich who died in a serious crash in Clackamas County on May 20.</p> <p>Police said Bianca was a passenger in a car driven by another teenager. She was one of three teens who died in crashes in the past five weeks.</p> <p>On Sunday, KATU reached out to ODOT a day before the start of "100 deadliest days for teen drivers."</p> <p>"Summertime is always a dangerous time for younger drivers. That's when a lot of our new drivers are out there for the first time. That's when a lot of them are getting their real driving experience out there," said Don Hamilton, ODOT Spokesperson.</p> <p>The CDC said the most prevalent risk factors include inexperience, distracted driving, speeding, substance use, and not using seat belts.</p> <p>"Everybody getting into a car needs to fasten their seatbelt, everybody driving a car can't move until everybody has their seatbelts on," said Hamilton.</p> <p>The CDC said 48%, almost half of drivers and passengers between 16 and 19 who died in crashes in 2019 were not wearing seatbelts.</p> <p>The 100 deadliest days for teen drivers start on Memorial Day and end exactly 100 days later on Labor Day, September 5.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Hoopfest returns: less courts, less teams</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.krem.com/article/entertainment/events/hoopfest/hoopfest-returns-less-courts-less-teams-registered/293-9338fa7b-cb2e-442d-8f6d-54c6e05880ef">https://www.krem.com/article/entertainment/events/hoopfest/hoopfest-returns-less-courts-less-teams-registered/293-9338fa7b-cb2e-442d-8f6d-54c6e05880ef</a>
GIST	<p>SPOKANE, Wash. — After a two-year hiatus, Hoopfest is returning.</p> <p>"We want to be a bright spot in this community. We want people to be proud that they live where Hoopfest is because we are very proud to be in downtown Spokane," Hoopfest Executive Director Riley Stockton said.</p> <p>Stockton says that this year, there will be about 75 less courts because there are not as many teams registered. Hoopfest is used to hosting around 6,000 teams. The deadline to register is Tuesday, May 31 and, as of right now, only a little more than 3,200 teams have signed up.</p> <p>"I think we will be back to that 6,000 team mark. It just might take a couple years," Stockton said. "We will have enough people to make it feel full down here no matter what we end up with."</p> <p>Hoopfest was canceled two years in a row. The non-profit took a hit financially.</p> <p>"It was definitely tough," Stockton said. "We're a non-profit with 5-6 employees and so it was tough, but our sponsors have been really great to us."</p> <p>Stockton says they lost some momentum.</p>

	<p>"I think some people still have their reservations about large groups, which is fine," Stockton said.</p> <p>Hoopfest is still looking for more volunteers. Teams have until Tuesday, May 31 at midnight to register. Stockton says there is a chance the deadline could be extended. But, to play it safe, teams should sign up by then.</p> <p>"I am 100% confident that, no matter what, we will still be the largest 3 on 3 tournament in the world and we will continue to grow for the foreseeable future," Stockton said.</p> <p>One major change this year is the center court location. It will be under the U.S. Pavilion.</p> <p>Stockton says there's no better setting in Spokane.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Key metric trigger indoor mask mandate?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-surpasses-key-covid-19-metric-that-could-trigger-indoor-mask-mandate">https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-surpasses-key-covid-19-metric-that-could-trigger-indoor-mask-mandate</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - A key metric Governor <a href="#">Jay Inslee</a> used to determine the lifting of a state wide mask mandate in March has been surpassed by the recent surge of <a href="#">COVID</a> infections.</p> <p>He said he would not lift the mask mandate if the rate of COVID hospitalizations was above 5 per 100,000 people. As of May 27, the Department of Health lists the rate as 7 per 100,000. The number has been increasing over the last 3 weeks.</p> <p>Inslee and Lt Gov. Denny Heck <a href="#">both announced on Wednesday they had contracted COVID</a>. Both were said to be isolating and did not give each other the virus.</p> <p>During a Department of Health briefing on that same day, officials indicated they are not recommending a return of the statewide indoor mask mandate, instead only 'strongly recommending' people wear a mask indoors.</p> <p>"We are not returning to any broad mask requirements at this time, but we are strongly recommending that masks be worn in crowded or confined indoor spaces," said Lacy Fehrenbach of DOH.</p> <p>"[COVID-19] is a wily beast—we are going to make decisions every day based on our best available science, and that's what we are doing," Inslee said a week before his office announced he had the virus, and two days before the hospitalization metric reached 7 per 100,000.</p> <p>"At the moment, we do not see it entering that zone where hospitals cannot function," said Inslee.</p> <p>On March 21, when the Governor <a href="#">lifted the mask mandate</a>, the COVID hospitalization rate was 2.5 per 100,000.</p> <p>Public Health Officer Dr. Jeff Duchin said at the time, he thought the 5 per 100,000 rate was too high a threshold for a mask mandate, saying a lower rate will protect more people.</p> <p>"I am a little bit concerned about what seems to be a high hospitalization rate threshold... for implementation of community measures, like masking," Duchin said on March 13.</p> <p>By comparison, Los Angeles County now has a hospitalization rate of 4.5 per 100,000. Some schools like UCLA, which is in Los Angeles County, have instituted their own mask mandate.</p> <p>The Northwest Folklife Festival during the Memorial Day weekend at Seattle required masks and vaccine verifications for all indoor venues.</p>

	<p>"If we're not taking care of our people, we are not doing it right," said Artistic Director Benjamin Hunter.</p> <p>According to the Centers for Disease Control Risk Assessment maps, 15 of the state's 39 counties have moved into the yellow 'medium-risk' zone. However, when it comes to rate of transmission from one person to another, 30 counties are now in the red, denoting the highest risk for transmission.</p> <p>"Cases are rising on the west side," said Dr. Bob Lutz, COVID-19 Medical Advisor for the Department of Health. "We are seeing a rise on the east side now, not at the same degree."</p> <p>"It is hard to predict in what direction it will go," said Secretary of Health Dr. Umair Shah. "I will tell you that you'll start to see increases in communities throughout Washington; none of us are immune to this, it's just a matter of the protections we put in place."</p> <p>The governor is set to attend an event in the Tri-Cities area on Thursday. The Department of Health recommends people who test positive for COVID isolate the first five days after a diagnosis and then wear five days afterwards if they need to leave isolation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Holiday weekend flight cancelations: 7,000</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cbsnews.com/news/memorial-day-weekend-travel-flight-cancellations/">https://www.cbsnews.com/news/memorial-day-weekend-travel-flight-cancellations/</a>
GIST	<p>The Memorial Day holiday weekend is proving a messy one for many airlines, with carriers canceling thousands of flights worldwide, including hundreds in the U.S. on Monday.</p> <p>On Monday, 1,634 flights had been canceled as of 11:52 p.m. ET, according to flight tracking website <a href="#">FlightAware</a>. That followed roughly 1,640 cancellations on Sunday, 1,500 on Saturday and 2,300 on Friday. More than 400 of Monday's cancellations involved aircraft scheduled to fly to or from U.S. cities.</p> <p>Delta Air Lines canceled the most flights among major U.S. airlines, scratching 133 flights on Monday, or 4% of its operations, according to FlightAware. The carrier was forced to cancel more than 400 flights on Saturday and Sunday.</p> <p>Saturday's cancellations were due to bad weather and "air traffic control actions," Atlanta-based Delta said in an email to The Associated Press, noting it's trying to cancel flights at least 24 hours in advance of the Memorial Day weekend. Delta told CBS News that "around 90%" of its customers who had a cancelled flight Sunday were rebooked on a flight "later in the day."</p> <p>Delta announced on its website on Thursday that from July 1 to Aug. 7, it would reduce service by about 100 daily departures, primarily in parts of the U.S. and Latin America that Delta frequently serves.</p> <p>"More than any time in our history, the various factors currently impacting our operation — weather and air traffic control, vendor staffing, increased COVID case rates contributing to higher-than-planned unscheduled absences in some work groups — are resulting in an operation that isn't consistently up to the standards Delta has set for the industry in recent years," said Delta's Chief Customer Experience Officer Allison Ausband in a post.</p> <p>Among other U.S. carriers, by Monday afternoon American Airlines had cancelled 121 flights, or 3% of its operations, according to FlightAware.</p> <p>Airlines and tourist destinations are <a href="#">anticipating monster crowds</a> this summer as travel restrictions ease and pandemic fatigue overcomes lingering fear of contracting COVID-19 during travel.</p> <p>Many forecasters believe the number of travelers will match or even surpass levels in the good-old, pre-pandemic days. However, airlines have thousands fewer employees than they did in 2019, and that has at times contributed to widespread flight cancellations.</p>

### Airfares take off

People who are only now booking travel for the summer are experiencing the [sticker shock](#).

Domestic airline fares for summer are averaging more than \$400 for a round trip, 24% higher than this time in 2019, before the pandemic, and a robust 45% higher than a year ago, according to travel-data firm Hopper.

Internationally, fares are also up from 2019, but only 10%. Prices to Europe are about 5% cheaper than before the pandemic — \$868 for the average round trip, according to Hopper. Keyes said Europe is the best travel bargain out there. That is partly due to some travelers' concerns about traveling to the region due to Russia's war in Ukraine, which means Western Europe is a buyer's market for the moment, [according](#) to CBS News' Peter Greenberg.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Brazil floods death toll rises; dozens lost</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/death-toll-brazil-floods-91-dozens-lost-85070709">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/death-toll-brazil-floods-91-dozens-lost-85070709</a>
GIST	<p>Authorities in northeastern Brazil's Pernambuco state said Monday that 91 deaths have been confirmed from flooding over the weekend, with more two dozen people still missing.</p> <p>Hundreds of state and federal rescue workers were searching for 26 people currently unaccounted for, according to the official statement.</p> <p>Brazil's President Jair Bolsonaro on Monday flew over the affected area of Pernambuco's capital, Recife, and neighboring Jaboatao dos Guararapes. Speaking to reporters afterward, he said that landing in the helicopter wasn't possible due to the soaked soil.</p> <p>He also noted the country has recently experienced similar disasters in the mountains above Rio de Janeiro, in southern Bahia state and in Minas Gerais state.</p> <p>“Unfortunately, these catastrophes happen in a continent-sized country,” he said. “We're all obviously sad. We express our sympathy to family members. Our bigger objective is to comfort families and also, with material means, attend to the population.”</p> <p>The government is moving to make funds available to municipalities that have declared a state of emergency, Daniel Ferreira, the minister of regional development, said at the press conference. He also highlighted a new credit line available to cities afflicted by such disasters.</p> <p>Experts say climate change contributes to more intense rainfall, and the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change has classified Recife's metropolitan region as one of the world's most vulnerable cities. The low-lying metro region is set at the delta of three rivers, features floodplains and a network of dozens of canals and is home to some 4 million people.</p> <p>In March, Recife became the first Latin American city to sign on for participation in a program to that will create insurance against climate disasters created by a network of local and regional governments and financed by German development bank KfW.</p> <p>The state's civil defense authority said in a statement that the flooding has displaced 5,000 people from their homes, and has reinforced its alert about still-high risk of landslides. Rain has continued, albeit with less intensity.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Car barrels into crowd: 2 killed, 20 injured</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/killed-19-injured-car-barrels-nebraska-crowd-85067338">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/killed-19-injured-car-barrels-nebraska-crowd-85067338</a>

GIST	<p>LINCOLN, Neb. -- Two people were killed and 20 others were injured after a crash that sent two cars careening into a crowd of bystanders while an annual Memorial Day weekend “cruise” night was wrapping up in Nebraska’s capital, police said Monday.</p> <p>Two women, ages 20 and 22, had been inside one of the cars and died in the Sunday night crash on O Street in Lincoln. Of the injured bystanders, one person was listed in critical condition and the others were treated at hospitals for injuries not believed to be life-threatening, police said.</p> <p>“We do not believe nor is there any evidence this was an intentional act,” Lincoln police said in a statement.</p> <p>Lincoln Police Chief Teresa Ewins said in a news conference Monday afternoon that neither of the vehicles involved in the crash was participating in the “Americruise” event, which has been taking place in the city since the early 1990s. It was a collision that could have happened at any time, she said.</p> <p>“At the time of the collision there wasn't a lot of people out," Ewins said. "The cars were not flowing down street as normal during this event.”</p> <p>Police said the crash happened when a 18-year-old Omaha man driving a black Ford Taurus traveling westbound on O Street struck a white Toyota Corolla that was “facing” eastbound. The women, both in the Corolla, were pronounced dead at the scene. The driver of the Taurus was taken to a hospital with non-life threatening injuries, police said.</p> <p>The impact drove both vehicles onto the sidewalk. The Taurus had rolled over onto its top, trapping two victims who were rescued by bystanders who pushed the car back on its wheels.</p> <p>O Street has been a popular spot for cruisers over the Memorial Day weekend and thousands of spectators have gathered at times to watch from business parking lots. However, authorities say some drivers have attempted dangerous maneuvers to excite the crowd, such as burnouts and speeding, and law enforcement had an increased presence this year, the Lincoln Journal Star reported.</p> <p>“We'll be changing a lot of things in regards to people that are coming to Lincoln to cause havoc like that,” Ewins said, referring to the extracurricular activity as sideshows. “It's not acceptable. And yes, things will change.”</p> <p>A spectator was killed at the event in July 2000 when a non-participant car veered off O Street and hit 39-year-old Connie McCullough. She died shielding her children.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Canada to cap market for handguns</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/handgun-freeze-key-feature-canadas-firearm-bill-85074812">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/handgun-freeze-key-feature-canadas-firearm-bill-85074812</a>
GIST	<p>TORONTO -- Canadian Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s government introduced legislation Monday that would put a freeze on importing, buying or selling handguns.</p> <p>“We are capping the number of handguns in this country,” Trudeau said.</p> <p>The regulations to halt the growth of personally owned handguns is expected to be enacted this fall.</p> <p>“It will be illegal to buy, sell, transfer or import handguns anywhere in Canada,” the prime minister said. Families of shooting victims joined him at a press conference in Ottawa.</p> <p>Canada already has plans to ban 1,500 types of military-style firearms and offer a mandatory buyback program that will begin at the end of the year. Trudeau said if someone really wants to keep their assault weapon it will be made completely inoperable.</p>

Canada already expanded background checks.

Trudeau has long had plans to enact tougher gun laws but the introduction of the new measure comes after mass shootings in Uvalde, Texas, and Buffalo, N.Y., this month.

Public Safety Minister Marco Mendicino called the legislation the most significant step Canada has taken in a generation.

“Countries that do a good job of controlling guns do a good job of controlling gun violence,” Mendicino said in an interview with The Associated Press.

Bill Blair, minister of emergency preparedness, said Canada is very different from the United States.

“In Canada, gun ownership is a privilege not a right,” Blair said. “This is a principal that differentiates ourselves from many other countries in the world, notably our colleagues and friends to the south.”

Canada has had far fewer mass shootings than the U.S. in part because of a lack of easy access to guns, though the U.S. population also is far larger than Canada's.

Blair noted guns are often smuggled in illegally from the U.S., which he noted has one of the largest small arms arsenals in the world.

The government plans to fight gun smuggling and trafficking by increasing criminal penalties, providing more tools to investigate firearms crimes and strengthening border measures. Trudeau said increased funding already helped border officials double the amount of smuggled guns confiscated at the U.S. border.

The government also said the bill would also allow for the removal of gun licenses from people involved in acts of domestic violence or criminal harassment, such as stalking.

The bill would create a new “red flag” law allowing courts to require that people considered a danger to themselves or others surrender their firearms to police. The government said the measure would guard the safety of those applying through the process, often women in danger of domestic abuse, by protecting their identities.

The government said it will require rifle magazines to be permanently altered so they can never hold more than five rounds and will ban the sale and transfer of large-capacity magazines under the Criminal Code.

“Canada can teach us a lot,” tweeted Bruce Heyman, a former U.S. ambassador to Canada under the Obama administration.

Trudeau said his government recognizes the vast majority of Canadians who own guns are responsible but the level of gun violence is unacceptable. Mendicino said they are aware the announcement could lead to a rush to buy guns before the law is enacted and urged Parliament to pass it as soon as possible.

The new measures are assured of passing in Canada's Parliament as the ruling Liberals and leftist opposition New Democrats have enough votes.

Pierre Poilievre, who is running to be leader of the Conservative party, said law-abiding gun owners should be respected and dangerous criminals should be jailed.

“Other than using firearms for sport shooting and hunting, there is no reason anyone in Canada should need guns in their everyday lives,” Trudeau said. “We need less gun violence.”



	"We cannot let the gun debate become so polarized that nothing gets done. We cannot let that happen in our country. This is about freedom. People should be free to go to the supermarket, their school or their place of worship without fear."
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Omaha chemical company fire; evacuations</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/residents-evacuate-fire-rages-omaha-chemical-company-85077979">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/residents-evacuate-fire-rages-omaha-chemical-company-85077979</a>
GIST	<p>OMAHA, Neb. -- Fire raged through a chemical company Monday night just southwest of downtown Omaha, forcing some nearby residents to evacuate and leaving thousands without power.</p> <p>Thick smoke billowed from the Nox-Crete facility, but no injuries had been reported, according to KETV.</p> <p>Battalion Chief Scott Fitzpatrick said the first call for help came shortly before 7 p.m.</p> <p>Fitzpatrick said firefighters first struggled to access the fire, then realized it was bigger than first thought and pulled back knowing there were chemicals and propane bottles on site.</p> <p>According to its website, Nox-Crete makes form coating and deactivator, liquid floor hardeners, joint fillers, curing and sealing compounds and water repellents. The company had not yet released a statement.</p> <p>KETV reports that explosions could be seen as part of the building collapsed and ruptured propane containers.</p> <p>Omaha firefighters estimated it would be hours before the fire could be controlled.</p> <p>Those living nearby were initially encouraged to shelter in place, but an alert just before 9 p.m. urged residents between 13th and 20th, Leavenworth to Martha to evacuate. Those who could not evacuate were urged to stay inside with the windows closed.</p> <p>Pottawattamie County Emergency Management says the smoke poses no toxicity risks.</p> <p>Omaha Public Power District said more than 2,500 customers were without electricity in the neighborhoods near the fire.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 NATO more aggressive stance on Russia</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsweek.com/no-restrictions-nato-take-more-aggressive-stance-against-russia-1711407?">https://www.newsweek.com/no-restrictions-nato-take-more-aggressive-stance-against-russia-1711407?</a>
GIST	<p>NATO has "no restrictions" when it comes to deploying its forces in eastern Europe to respond to Russian aggression, the U.S.-led military alliance's deputy secretary general, Mircea Geoană, said Sunday.</p> <p>Geoană, who was also a former president of Romania, made the comments in an interview with the AFP news agency published during a trip where he met with lawmakers from members of the alliance in Vilnius, Lithuania, on Sunday and Monday.</p> <p>They were attending the Spring Session of the NATO Parliamentary Assembly.</p> <p>Russia and NATO agreed on the 1997 Founding Act to work to prevent a build-up of armed forces in agreed regions of Europe, including eastern and central Europe.</p> <p>But Geoană told AFP that Russia had decided to violate the agreement by invading Ukraine and not have regular dialogue with the alliance.</p> <p>"They [Russia] took decisions, they made obligations there not to aggress neighbours, which they are doing, and to have regular consultations with NATO, which they don't," he said.</p>



"Now we have no restrictions to have robust posture in the eastern flank and to ensure that every square inch of NATO's territory is protected by Article 5 and our allies."

Article 5 is the NATO agreement that stipulates if one member is attacked, it is attack on all of them and other members must intervene militarily.

Geoană did not provide any further details of a planned NATO deployment but said there would be "a robust, flexible and sustainable presence" in eastern Europe.

Newsweek contacted the Russian foreign ministry for comment.

Finland and Sweden, both historically non-military aligned countries, this month applied to become members of the alliance, despite Russia threatening military and political reprisals if they join.

On May 21, only three days after Finland sent its application to join NATO, Russia halted natural gas exports to the Nordic country, with which it shares an 800-mile border.

For Finland and Sweden to formally join NATO, all 30 members states' parliaments would need to ratify it. However, Turkey has said it would block the NATO bids.

Swedish and Finnish diplomats met in Turkey on May 25 to try and reach a deal that would see Ankara approve the membership of the two Nordic states.

Defense ministers from the NATO countries are due to meet in Madrid in mid-June to discuss the presence of the alliance in the Baltic states in Europe, as well as Finland and Sweden's applications. Both Nordic countries will be joining the summit in the Spanish capital, to mark Spain's 40th year as a NATO member.

The Baltic states of Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania are pushing for NATO to deploy more troops in the region and establish large headquarters in each of three countries.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Seattle students demand stricter gun laws</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/its-really-terrifying-to-be-a-student-seattle-students-demand-stricter-gun-laws-after-texas-shooting/">https://www.seattletimes.com/education-lab/its-really-terrifying-to-be-a-student-seattle-students-demand-stricter-gun-laws-after-texas-shooting/</a>
GIST	<p>As the nation focused on the <a href="#">massacre at a Texas elementary school</a>, the superintendent of schools in Washington state issued a sober warning that a mass shooting could happen here, despite efforts to add security measures in recent years.</p> <p>Parents and teachers expressed their heartbreak. And so did students, some of whom walked out of classes this week demanding stricter gun laws.</p> <p>"It's really terrifying to be a student in these times," 17-year-old Nova High School student Sydney Walter said. "It's kind of like everyone has some type of weight on their chest and it's hard to breathe. We want to just breathe."</p> <p>It's been a difficult week for the education community in the wake of Tuesday's shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, that left <a href="#">19 children and two teachers dead</a>. It comes just months after a school shooting in Michigan led to copycat threats of violence that left the Seattle area on edge.</p> <p>Back in November and December, some Seattle schools shut down, others went on lockdown, and <a href="#">teachers held sickouts</a> to take time to process the uptick in threats of violence directed at schools. Multiple students were arrested because they threatened violence and <a href="#">one was charged with felony harassment</a> for threatening to kill and false reporting.</p>

“After the Michigan shooting, we saw almost an immediate kind of response,” said Erin Romanuk, a student support services manager at Seattle Public Schools. “It felt different.”

A 15-year-old student [shot and killed four students](#) on Nov. 30 at Oxford High School in Michigan. Afterward, a TikTok challenge encouraging students to commit acts of violence at school was seen as the reason threats of violence spiked, Romanuk said.

“The scary part of this is I think there is some numbness to what continues to happen,” Romanuk said. “We’re prepared to be able to talk about things but it’s almost to the point where our young people ... this is their school experience.”

There haven’t been any reports of Seattle school closures because of threats after the Texas school shooting, Seattle Public Schools officials said. Since December, threats of violence have tapered off but are still higher than pre-pandemic numbers, Romanuk said. The intensity and frequency of threats spiked between Thanksgiving break and the first few weeks of December.

“It’s been a horrible school year,” Romanuk said, referencing the threat coupled with the pandemic. “People are tired — the weight on people’s shoulders. They’re numb and we just want to make sure they know they are not alone and we’ll do what we can to help in any situation.”

In a statement, SPS Superintendent Brent Jones said the district routinely evaluates its safety procedures and reviews the findings of national events like school shootings.

“The tragic mass shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, on Tuesday has left our school communities stunned and in a state of grief,” Jones said. “Because the event happened at a school, SPS students, families, staff, and community, may feel heightened concern about safety in our schools.”

To report a threat, people can call the SPS Safe Schools Hotline at 206-252-0510. State Superintendent Chris Reykdal urged families to reconsider having firearms in their homes.

“There is simply no debate: Our homes are safer when there are no guns inside them,” Reykdal said in a statement. “In America, the overwhelming data are clear that gun owners and their families are more likely to die by their own gun than they are to use them in self-defense or protection.”

The state has prioritized and made investments in threat-assessment protocols, safety plans and procedures, Reykdal said. “But, make no mistake, the Texas tragedy can still happen here.”

In other parts of the state, investigations into threats are occurring. Clark County sheriff’s deputies [arrested a student who brought a handgun](#) to Heritage High School in his backpack Thursday, police officials said. The student told officers he didn’t intend to hurt himself or anyone else.

And in Everett, there was a report of a firearm near Cascade High School on Friday, [according to police](#). There was no active threat but out of caution, the school went on lockdown.

In other areas, students are turning to activism.

Students at Seattle’s Robert Eagle Staff Middle School and Pathfinder K-8 School participated in a nationwide walkout Thursday advocating for stricter gun laws. Students in Tacoma and Burlington also walked out.

For Eagle Staff eighth grader Roman Naar it was the first protest he attended. Naar said he was nervous but glad he was able to honor the students who were killed in Texas.

“I thought it was a very important action I needed to make,” Naar said. “I thought it was really unjust that a lot of people got shot in Texas so I wanted to participate in my school walkout and protest and share my voice.”

	<p>On Wednesday, Seattle students plan to rally at City Hall at 3 p.m. to demand a mental health counselor at every school building and for Gov. Jay Inslee to call for a special legislative session to ban all semi-automatic weapons.</p> <p>Walter, the Nova High School student, is helping organize the event. She said that when she was rattled by the Michigan shooting, she didn't know what she could do.</p> <p>"It didn't propel me to take action because I wasn't sure what info I should trust or listen to."</p> <p>But <a href="#">school shootings keep happening</a>, so she decided she needed to advocate for mental health resources and stricter gun policies. Gun violence is preventable, Walter said, and action needs to happen.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Group go to homes, search for illegal voters</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/group-doorbells-homes-across-washington-searching-for-illegal-voters-and-drawing-complaints/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/politics/group-doorbells-homes-across-washington-searching-for-illegal-voters-and-drawing-complaints/</a>
GIST	<p>CLYDE HILL — Clipboards in hand, Jenifer Short and Emily Tadlock strolled a swanky suburban neighborhood on a recent afternoon, checking homes against a list of voter registrations.</p> <p>Knocking on the front door of a house with an Alfa Romeo in the driveway, they chatted with a woman, a renter who verified she was registered to vote at the address, but who said another person registered there was the homeowner, who did not live there.</p> <p>After the brief chat, Short and Tadlock moved on, marking down the information on an "incident report" for the group they're volunteering for, the <a href="#">Washington Voter Research Project</a>.</p> <p>"We're detectives, OK?" said Tadlock, somewhat jokingly describing the work of checking out thousands of voter registrations flagged by the group as potentially suspicious.</p> <p>Across Washington, hundreds of volunteers like Tadlock and Short have been knocking on doors, questioning residents and searching for evidence of voter fraud — or at least outdated voter rolls.</p> <p>It's an effort led by Glen Morgan, a conservative activist from Thurston County known for filing <a href="#">frequent campaign finance complaints</a> against Democratic politicians, unions and other allied groups.</p> <p>While Morgan seeks to distance the canvassing from outlandish and false conspiracies about the 2020 presidential election, he acknowledged his group has attracted 350 volunteers across the state in part due to the distrust in the election system stoked by former President Donald Trump.</p> <p>What's happening here is loosely connected to <a href="#">a national campaign</a> by Trump supporters hunting door-to-door for proof that the 2020 election was fraudulent. The activity in some states has drawn fierce blowback and accusations of voter intimidation. Civil rights groups in Colorado <a href="#">filed a federal lawsuit in March</a>, alleging canvassing by Trump supporters there has targeted neighborhoods with a high number of people of color.</p> <p>In Washington, the Morgan-led doorbelling campaign has generated complaints from people put off by the inquiries, leading several county auditors and Secretary of State Steve Hobbs to issue <a href="#">public statements</a> warning that the group is not authorized by any election office.</p> <p>In interviews, some county auditors said they have received reports of canvassers trying to pose as government officials.</p> <p>"People called very concerned, because they were portraying themselves as county employees," said Thurston County Auditor Mary Hall. "They had like the Thurston County logo on their clipboard."</p>

Hall said her office “would never go door-to-door asking voters if they voted or how long they’ve lived there, anything like that.”

From reports she’s received, Spokane County Auditor Vicky Dalton said some residents “got the impression that two canvassers were trying to represent themselves as working for or with” her office or the Secretary of State’s Office. “We don’t do this kind of doorbelling or canvassing door-to-door,” she said. “We don’t sponsor it, we don’t endorse it, nobody is doing this under our authority.”

Michael Simonds, a Bremerton resident, recalls an encounter with one of the canvassers when he was at a friend’s house earlier this year. Simonds said the woman started out reasonable but transitioned to a rant about “illegal immigrants” and ballot signature forgery. “It kind of went off the deep end,” he said. He said the woman implied she was working with the county auditor’s office. “It seemed like a misinformation campaign,” he said

State Democratic Party Chair Tina Podlodowski criticized the doorbelling as invasive and “very much a voter intimidation effort that is being taken up by the GOP.”

Morgan rejects the criticisms, saying his organization is nonpartisan and is not looking to mislead or intimidate anyone. He said volunteers are trained to properly identify themselves as volunteers and not government workers. He said they also forbid taking photos or posting information on social media about homes they visit, and added that he has banned a few people who violated such rules.

Morgan called some of the comments county auditors, particularly Dalton, have made about his group “shockingly ignorant and libelous” and said some complaints seem to be triggered when volunteers visit homes of “hardcore leftists.”

The group works off voter registration lists — which are public — cross-referenced with data from the Postal Service, Social Security Administration and other sources, to find voters who have likely moved or died.

Morgan, a former employee of the Freedom Foundation, a conservative Olympia-based think tank focused on fighting public sector unions, said his effort is all volunteer and is not backed by any big money. Besides Morgan, the only other officer listed for the group in state records is Sharon Hanek, a Bonney Lake accountant who ran unsuccessfully for a Pierce County Council seat in 2018.

In a recent interview at a Bellevue coffee shop, volunteers with Morgan’s group downplayed interest in large-scale vote fraud conspiracy theories that have been lobbed by Trump and his allies in recent years. They said they’ve just seen flaws in the system and want the voter rolls to be clean.

“I don’t believe in any big conspiracies, but I think that doing this work, it might provide information that we need to look into further,” said Kim Taylor, of Seattle.

Tadlock said she grew concerned when she personally received two ballots after getting married and moving to Mercer Island. She called King County Elections, which updated her registration to fix the problem. “I think mail-in ballots are inherently fishy,” she said.

Short, an Edmonds resident, said she grew suspicious about mail-in balloting in 2020 after hearing about a volunteer accepting ballots near an Everett drop box. She said she called the county, and was told it had no volunteers doing that. “That got me thinking there are a lot of ways voter fraud occurs,” she said.

Short filed in May to run for state representative as a Republican, challenging Rep. Lillian Ortiz-Self, D-Mukilteo, in the 21st Legislative District. She spent last week in Michigan with Washington initiative promoter Tim Eyman, who has taken his operation on the road after garnering massive fines for violating campaign laws here. Eyman is now working to qualify a Michigan “ballot integrity” initiative that would require photo identification for in-person voting and restrict mail-in balloting.

On her Facebook page, Short has promoted “2000 Mules,” the film by conservative activist Dinesh D’Souza, which asserts cellphone tracking data shows Democratic-aligned ballot “mules” in several swing states cost Trump the 2020 presidential election. The film has been widely discredited by experts for distortions about its cellphone data and failing to prove its fraud claims.

Washington state has nearly 4.8 million registered voters, a population that is constantly shifting as people die or move to new addresses without updating their registrations. Elections officials are constantly sifting through data in an effort to keep the voter rolls up to date, though Morgan argues their efforts are inadequate.

Documented cases of voter fraud are exceedingly rare, both nationally and in Washington. In the 2016 and 2018 general elections, the Secretary of State’s Office identified 216 cases of possible fraud — or about 0.003% of the 6.5 million votes cast in those elections.

Two county auditors said the bulk of questionable voter names brought to their attention by Morgan so far appear to be valid military and overseas voters, who are allowed by federal law to vote at their last registered address or at the address of a family member.

Morgan’s group gave Thurston County a list of 2,000 names, according to Hall. The office analyzed the names, and found no fraudulent voters. “Most of what they were calling suspicious was military and overseas voters,” she said.

Likewise in Clark County, “a majority of the names” on lists supplied by Morgan’s group are military and overseas voters, according to Auditor Greg Kimsey.

Morgan’s list did identify one Clark County voter who had died in the 1980s, Kimsey said, and the auditor’s office has canceled that registration. “No ballots have been voted in that voter’s name since they were deceased,” he added.

In King County, an initial list supplied by Morgan’s group flagging hundreds of voter registration anomalies did not turn up any illegal voters, King County Elections Director Julie Wise said in an email to the group’s county coordinator on May 6.

The county looked at the list and found nearly half of the names were “inactive” voters, meaning they do not receive ballots, and will not in the future unless they update their information, Wise said in the email. In other cases, voters appeared to be legally voting from addresses where they previously lived.

Kendall Hodson, chief of staff for King County Elections, said the office has received no complaints about the canvassers and welcomes any help on keeping voter registrations up to date. “We work with a lot of different partners to keep our rolls clean. We appreciate it,” she said.

Morgan said his group will continue to do what he described as unglamorous groundwork until they’re convinced the voter rolls are clean.

“We are not stopping. We are not going away,” said Morgan. “We are not caught up in one election cycle, or any party.”

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HEADLINE	05/30 Canceling plans last minute new normal
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/canceling-plans-at-the-last-minute-is-new-normal-11653855692">https://www.wsj.com/articles/canceling-plans-at-the-last-minute-is-new-normal-11653855692</a>
GIST	Calling off plans at the last minute used to be seen as rude. Now it can feel like a fixture of social life.

Christina Dugan skipped her birthday ski trip with friends to Colorado this winter after she spiked a 103 fever. Though she tested negative for Covid-19 and had mostly recovered, the Houston photographer worried that others wouldn't be OK with her joining. Her friends went ahead without her.

"You don't know if the plans are really on until you get there," the 30-year-old says.

[As Covid-19 cases rise in some parts of the country](#), cancellations keep coming. Among friends, families and colleagues, reasons for canceling plans range widely, as does the timing. This is partly due to [the uneven nature by which Covid-19 spreads](#), and partly due to a willingness to beg off plans with little more than sniffles. The availability of rapid tests—and events that require them—has also meant that people find out their health status at the last minute.

The pandemic, and the Covid-canceled trips and events, have made us more accustomed to plans falling through at the last minute, psychologists and individuals say. We're also comfortable moving ahead with plans when others back out, they add, in part because rescheduling could mean another round of postponements.

"We almost have to think about it as a new normal," says Reshawna Chapple, an Orlando-based therapist with [Talkspace](#), a virtual therapy company. "The last-minute [cancellation]...is no longer frowned upon."

Lana Zaretsky Blair, 41 years old, was planning to take a girls' trip with two friends to Lake Geneva, Wis. As the trip approached, the Chicago attorney backed out because she was hesitant about dining indoors or getting massages during an uptick in cases this winter. Her friends went anyway.

"They ended up texting me throughout and told me how glad they were that I wasn't there," she says.

Covid has made those prone to breaking plans feel less guilty about bailing last-minute, says Mahzad Hojjat, professor of social psychology at University of Massachusetts Dartmouth who studies social connections and friendships.

"You always have those friends who come late, who don't show up as frequently or don't really enjoy being part of a group; those people are now given more of a pass," she says.

Constant cancellations have also exacerbated another prepandemic phenomenon: ghosting, where others simply don't show up, says Dr. Hojjat.

"There are looser social rules," she says. "That's how people perceive it and they think it's OK to not show up."

Overall restaurant cancellations have ticked up slightly since the pandemic to 14.5% in May compared with 14% three years ago, according to reservations data from SevenRooms, a booking service. But restaurant owners say they are tracking an increase in last-minute cancellations recently.

Owners are sympathetic, but the habit has made it difficult to refill seats, says Mark Strausman, chef owner of Mark's Off Madison.

Some still take exception when people cancel at the last minute. Weddings can be an especially sore point.

Ginny Boland, a wedding planner, says earlier in the pandemic, last-minute guest cancellations were common and accepted by couples. Now, many of her clients are more upset by last-minute cancellations unless it is a documented case of Covid-19 or obvious symptoms.

Couples are also less understanding if guests decide to cancel because they wanted the wedding couple to take additional precautions or because they have general anxiety about being in a large group, says Ms. Boland.

“There is an expectation here to show up for things,” says the 28-year-old in Fort Worth, Texas.

Most people tend to accept plans that are made far into the future and not realize until closer to the date that they should have declined, says Dr. Chapple. Rather than decline last-minute, she suggests people can decide for themselves and classify their plans into soft and hard gatherings early on—similar to a hard deadline or meeting that is unmissable.

Later on, this designation can make it easier to decide which events are must, she says.

Wendy Battles, a cybersecurity analyst and podcaster, says she recently had to be understanding when a friend felt uncomfortable dining out at the last minute. Though the dinner had been in the works for over a month, she bailed a few days prior. Ms. Battles, who thinks she got her own case of Covid after dining out months prior, was sympathetic.

“Reconnecting with people has been difficult,” says the 57-year-old in New Haven, Conn.

Manny Sriva, 44, says he was sure he could cancel drinks with a friend due to his recent Covid illness. With plans to meet up for weeks, he texted to cancel roughly a week after he came down with the virus.

Instead, the friend said the diagnosis or potential contagiousness wasn’t a problem—especially because he too just had a bout of Covid. So Mr. Sriva went ahead.

“We sat around and had a couple of margaritas,” says Mr. Sriva, a New Yorker who met the friend in Fort Myers, Fla., where he has a second home.

While Mr. Sriva has fully recovered, he says Covid is a potential excuse that he would like to try to use again even if he isn’t ill. He hasn’t told other friends or co-workers about having Covid.

“There’s a thought that I would be able to use that as an excuse in the future,” he says. “I’m holding it in my pocket.”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Hepatitis outbreak to organic strawberries</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://finance.yahoo.com/news/hepatitis-outbreak-linked-organic-strawberries-111242374.html">https://finance.yahoo.com/news/hepatitis-outbreak-linked-organic-strawberries-111242374.html</a>
GIST	<p>The Food and Drug Administration is investigating two brands of organic strawberries sold across major supermarket chains in the U.S. for a possible link to Hepatitis A.</p> <p>The potentially tainted strawberries were sold under the FreshKampo and H-E-B brands and so far have affected 17 people and hospitalized 12 across three states in the U.S. and in Canada, <a href="#">the FDA said in a statement</a>.</p> <p>“The traceback investigations show that cases in California, Minnesota, and Canada report having purchased fresh organic strawberries branded as FreshKampo or H-E-B prior to becoming ill,” said the FDA, who is investigating the outbreak along with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.</p> <p>The strawberries are sold at supermarket chains Aldi, H-E-B, <a href="#">Kroger</a>, Trader Joe’s, <a href="#">Walmart</a>, Safeway, <a href="#">Sprouts Farmers Market</a>, <a href="#">Weis Markets</a>, and WinCo Foods. The FDA did not mention the origin of the strawberries, but Mexico-based FreshKampo noted on their website the production areas of its organic strawberries include Michoacán, Guanajuato, and Baja California, Mexico, and Morocco.</p> <p>The FDA said consumers, restaurants, and retailers should not sell, serve, or eat any fresh strawberries from these two brands if they had been purchased between Mar. 5, 2022, and Apr. 25, 2022.</p>



	<p>"If you are unsure of what brand you purchased when you purchased your strawberries, or where you purchased them from prior to freezing them, the strawberries should be thrown away," the FDA said.</p> <p><b>Hepatitis A</b></p> <p>Hepatitis A is a liver infection caused by a virus that's spread in the feces of an infected person. It is contagious but can be prevented by a vaccine.</p> <p>Symptoms of Hepatitis A include fatigue, nausea, stomach pain, and jaundice. In the most severe cases, it can lead to liver failure and death.</p> <p><a href="#">Illness onset</a> in the strawberry outbreak range from Mar. 28 to Apr.30. The FDA recommends anyone who isn't vaccinated and is developing these symptoms after consuming strawberries in the last two weeks to consult their health care professional.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Gas prices hit yet another record high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/30/business/gas-prices-memorial-day/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/30/business/gas-prices-memorial-day/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>Millions of Americans traveling this holiday weekend are being greeted by unprecedented prices at the gas pump.</p> <p>The national average for regular gasoline rose to a fresh record of \$4.62 a gallon on Monday, according to AAA. That's up by a penny from Sunday and 44 cents more expensive than a month ago.</p> <p>Gas prices are up sharply from last Memorial Day, when they averaged \$3.05 a gallon, according to AAA.</p> <p>Seven states are now averaging \$5-a-gallon gas, with the latest being Illinois (rounded up from \$4.996). New York and Arizona are just pennies away from hitting that milestone. And there are no states where gas prices average less than \$4.10 a gallon.</p> <p>In spite of high prices, AAA estimates that 34.9 million people are traveling by car this holiday weekend, up 4.6% from last year.</p> <p>Even after adjusting for inflation, gas prices are very elevated.</p> <p>Real (that is, inflation-adjusted) gas prices haven't been this high heading into Memorial Day weekend since 2012, according to the US Energy Information Administration. The all-time high for average inflation-adjusted gas prices was set in June 2008 at \$5.38 a gallon.</p> <p>Soaring gas prices reflect strong demand as people ramp up their summer travel plans and sluggish supply caused by a confluence of factors, including disruptions caused by the war in Ukraine and the fact that both the United States and OPEC are pumping less oil than before Covid-19.</p> <p>Another factor: After a series of retirements, US refineries are having trouble keeping up with surging demand for gasoline, diesel and jet fuel.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 German inflation highest level since 1970s</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/german-inflation-rate-hits-highest-level-early-1970s-85066065">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/german-inflation-rate-hits-highest-level-early-1970s-85066065</a>
GIST	<p>BERLIN -- Germany's annual inflation rate accelerated to 7.9% in May, its highest level in nearly half a century, according to an official estimate Monday.</p> <p>The Federal Statistical Office said year-on-year inflation jumped from 7.4% in April, with energy prices 38.3% higher than in May last year and food prices up 11.1%. Germany has Europe's biggest economy.</p>



	<p>It is the highest inflation rate since the winter of 1973-1974, when an oil crisis also fueled higher prices. Inflation in Germany stood at an already high 5.1% in February and leapt above the 7% mark in March following Russia's invasion of Ukraine.</p> <p>In month-on-month terms, the statistics office said prices were up 0.9% in May.</p> <p>In a separate report on Monday, the office said that people's earnings in Germany were down 1.8% in real terms in this year's first quarter compared with a year earlier as a result of inflation, which more than offset a nominal increase of 4%.</p> <p>In comments shortly before the latest inflation figure was released, Finance Minister Christian Lindner said that "the top priority must be fighting inflation."</p> <p>"Inflation is an enormous economic risk and we must fight this inflation so that no economic crisis grows out of it, so that no spiral develops through which inflation feeds itself," Lindner said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Nigeria's first monkeypox death for 2022</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/monkeypox-death-nigeria-2022-21-cases-confirmed-85066449">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/monkeypox-death-nigeria-2022-21-cases-confirmed-85066449</a>
GIST	<p>ABUJA, Nigeria -- Nigeria has recorded its first death from monkeypox this year in a patient with underlying medical conditions, the diseases control agency said.</p> <p>The Nigeria Centre for Disease Control and Prevention announced Sunday that in 2022 it has confirmed 21 out of 66 suspected cases of the disease, which is usually endemic in Nigeria and other parts of West and Central Africa.</p> <p>"The death was reported in a 40-year-old patient who had underlying co-morbidity and was on immunosuppressive medications," the Nigeria CDC said.</p> <p>Nigeria has not had an outbreak of monkeypox since September 2017 but it continues to report sporadic cases of the disease. At least 247 have been confirmed in 22 of its 36 states since then with 3.6% fatality rate, the disease control agency said.</p> <p>A spike in monkeypox cases reported in Europe and the U.S. has generated concerns among those countries, many of whom have not recorded a single case of the disease in years. Nearly 200 cases of the disease have been reported in more than 20 countries not usually known to have outbreaks, the World Health Organization said.</p> <p>Monkeypox has not previously triggered widespread outbreaks beyond Africa, where it is endemic.</p> <p>One of the new cases in the U.K. was recorded in a man days after his arrival from Nigeria on May 4. Nigeria has recorded six confirmed cases of the disease the British citizen left the country.</p> <p>Dr. Ifedayo Adetifa, head of the country's Center for Disease Control, told The Associated Press that nothing shows the British citizen contracted the disease in Nigeria and that the country remains prepared to respond to an outbreak of monkeypox.</p> <p>"The biggest challenge that you have with a disease such as monkeypox is that it is uncommon and the perceived risk by the population about how dangerous this condition is has been very low ... that is why ... we have conducted awareness training and advocacy training to increase the level of awareness of health care workers," Adetifa said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Food price hikes, hunger in Africa</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/war-ukraine-adds-food-price-hikes-hunger-africa-85062845">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/war-ukraine-adds-food-price-hikes-hunger-africa-85062845</a>

MOGADISHU, Somalia -- It now costs Ayan Hassan Abdirahman twice as much as it did just a few months ago to buy the wheat flour she uses to make breakfast each day for her 11 children in Somalia's capital.

Nearly all the wheat sold in Somalia comes from Ukraine and Russia, which have halted exports through the Black Sea since Moscow waged war on its neighbor on Feb. 24. The timing could not be worse: The U.N. has warned that an estimated 13 million people were facing severe hunger in the Horn of Africa region as a result of a persistent drought.

Abdirahman has been trying to make do by substituting sorghum, another more readily available grain, in her flatbread. Inflation, though, means the price of the cooking oil she still needs to prepare it has skyrocketed too — a jar that once cost \$16 is now selling for \$45 in the markets of Mogadishu.

“The cost of living is high nowadays, making it difficult for families even to afford flour and oil,” she says.

Haji Abdi Dhiblawe, a businessman who imports wheat flour into Somalia, fears the situation will only worsen: There is also a looming shortage of shipping containers to bring food supplies in from elsewhere at the moment.

“Somalis have no place to grow wheat, and we are not even familiar with how to grow it,” he says. “Our main concern now is what will the future hold for us when we currently run out of supplies.”

Another 18 million people are facing severe hunger in the Sahel, the part of Africa just below the Sahara Desert where farmers are enduring their worst agricultural production in more than a decade. The U.N. World Food Program says food shortages could worsen when the lean season arrives in late summer.

“Acute hunger is soaring to unprecedented levels and the global situation just keeps on getting worse. Conflict, the climate crisis, COVID-19 and surging food and fuel costs have created a perfect storm — and now we’ve got the war in Ukraine piling catastrophe on top of catastrophe,” WFP Executive Director David Beasley warned earlier this month.

Even the cost of therapeutic food for malnourished children could rise 16% over the next six months because of the war in Ukraine and disruptions related to the pandemic, UNICEF says.

African countries imported 44% of their wheat from Russia and Ukraine between 2018 and 2020, according to U.N. figures. The African Development Bank is already reporting a 45% increase in wheat prices on the continent, making everything from couscous in Mauritania to the fried donuts sold in Congo more expensive for customers.

“Africa has no control over production or logistics chains and is totally at the mercy of the situation,” said Senegalese President Macky Sall, the African Union chairperson, who has said he will travel to Russia and Ukraine to discuss the price woes.

Russian President Vladimir Putin pressed the West last week to lift sanctions against Moscow over the war in Ukraine, seeking to shift the blame from Russia to the West for a growing world food crisis that has been worsened by Ukraine's inability to ship millions of tons of grain and other agricultural products while under attack.

Putin told Italian Prime Minister Mario Draghi that Moscow “is ready to make a significant contribution to overcoming the food crisis through the export of grain and fertilizer on the condition that politically motivated restrictions imposed by the West are lifted,” according to the Kremlin.

Western officials have dismissed the Russian claims. U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken has noted that food, fertilizer and seeds are exempt from the sanctions imposed by the U.S. and many others on Russia.

Meanwhile, Ukraine has accused Russia of looting both grain and farm equipment from territories held by its forces. A Russia-installed official in southern Ukraine has confirmed that grain from last year's harvest there is being sent to buyers in Russia, according to a report Monday by Russia's Tass state news agency.

That grain, however, isn't make its way to Africa. In Cameroon, baker Sylvester Ako says he's seen his daily clientele drop from 300 customers a day to only 100 since bread prices jumped 40% because of the lack of wheat imports.

He's already let three of his seven employees go, and worries that he will have to shutter his Yaounde business entirely unless something changes.

"The price of a 50-kilogram (110-pound) bag of wheat now sells at \$60 — up from about \$30 — and the supply is not regular," Ako said.

Along with the shortfall in wheat imports, the African Development Bank is also warning of a potential 20% decline in food production on the continent because farmers are having to pay 300% more for their imported fertilizer.

The organization says it plans to address the issues through a \$1.5 billion plan that will provide farmers in Africa with certified seeds, fertilizer and other help. Reducing dependence on foreign imports is part of the strategy, but those economic transitions are likely to take years, not months.

Senegal's president says appetites can pivot more quickly. He's encouraging Africans to consume local grains that were once the staples of their diets.

"We must also change our eating habits," Sall said. "We dropped millet and started importing rice from Asia. Now we only know how to eat rice and we don't produce enough. We only know how to eat bread. We do not produce wheat."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Russia suffers losses lower rank officers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-says-russia-suffers-devastating-losses-among-lower-ranked-officers-2022-05-30/">https://www.reuters.com/world/europe/uk-says-russia-suffers-devastating-losses-among-lower-ranked-officers-2022-05-30/</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON, May 30 (Reuters) - Russia appears to have suffered devastating losses amongst mid- and junior-ranking officers in its conflict with Ukraine, raising the prospect of weaker military effectiveness in future, Britain's defence ministry said on Monday.</p> <p>Brigade and battalion commanders were probably deploying to the most dangerous positions while junior officers have had to lead low-level tactical actions, the ministry said on Twitter in its latest Defence Intelligence update.</p> <p>"With multiple credible reports of localised mutinies amongst Russia's forces in Ukraine, a lack of experienced and credible platoon and company commanders is likely to result (in) a further decrease in morale and continued poor discipline," it said.</p> <p>The loss of younger officers was likely to exacerbate Russia's problems in modernising its military command and control, the ministry said.</p> <p>"More immediately, battalion tactical groups which are being reconstituted in Ukraine from survivors of multiple units are likely to be less effective due to a lack of junior leaders," it said.</p>

	Russian forces intensified attacks on Monday to capture Sievierodonetsk, a key city in Ukraine's southeastern Donbas region which Moscow is targeting having failed to take the capital Kyiv early in the war.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 WHO: monkeypox unlikely into pandemic</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/unlikely-monkeypox-outbreak-will-lead-pandemic-says-who-2022-05-30/">https://www.reuters.com/business/healthcare-pharmaceuticals/unlikely-monkeypox-outbreak-will-lead-pandemic-says-who-2022-05-30/</a>
GIST	<p>LONDON, May 30 (Reuters) - The World Health Organization does not believe the monkeypox outbreak outside Africa will lead to a pandemic, an official said on Monday, adding it remains unclear if infected people who are not displaying symptoms can transmit the disease.</p> <p>More than 300 suspected and confirmed cases of monkeypox - a usually mild illness that spreads through close contact and can cause flu-like symptoms and pus-filled skin lesions - have been reported in May, mostly in Europe.</p> <p>The WHO is considering whether the outbreak should be assessed as a "potential public health emergency of international concern" or PHEIC. Such a declaration, as was done for COVID-19 and Ebola, would help accelerate research and funding to contain the disease.</p> <p>Asked whether this monkeypox outbreak has the potential to grow into a pandemic, Rosamund Lewis, technical lead for monkeypox from the WHO Health Emergencies Programme said: "We don't know but we don't think so."</p> <p>"At the moment, we are not concerned of a global pandemic," she said.</p> <p>Once monkeypox has been contracted, the duration of the rash emerging and scabs falling off is recognised as the infectious period, but there is limited information on whether there is any spread of the virus by people who are not symptomatic, she added.</p> <p>"We really don't actually yet know whether there's asymptomatic transmission of monkeypox - the indications in the past have been that this is not a major feature - but this remains to be determined, she said.</p> <p>The strain of virus implicated in the outbreak is understood to kill a small fraction of those infected, but no deaths have been reported so far.</p> <p>Most cases have cropped up in Europe rather than in the Central and West African countries where the virus is endemic, and are predominantly not linked to travel.</p> <p>Scientists are therefore looking into what might explain this unusual surge of cases, while public health authorities suspect there is some degree of community transmission.</p> <p>Some countries have begun to offer vaccines to close contacts of confirmed cases.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Parents try to keep kids safe from fentanyl</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/parents-try-to-keep-kids-safe-from-fentanyl-with-warnings-pleas-and-naloxone-training-11653760364?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos5">https://www.wsj.com/articles/parents-try-to-keep-kids-safe-from-fentanyl-with-warnings-pleas-and-naloxone-training-11653760364?mod=hp_trending_now_article_pos5</a>
GIST	Velvet Snow didn't know much about <a href="#">fentanyl</a> until a student at her daughter's high school in Belmont, Calif., died last year after using a drug laced with the synthetic opioid. Then this spring, the 18-year-old daughter of one of her closest friends died of fentanyl-related toxicity.

“Now I’m terrified,” says Ms. Snow, an event planner and mother of two daughters who lives in San Carlos, Calif. “You think this can’t happen to you but it can.”

Parents are increasingly alarmed about the dangers of fentanyl as overdose deaths rise. Two-thirds of last year’s [record number of drug-overdose deaths](#) were linked to [synthetic opioids](#), a category largely made up of fentanyl, according to recently released preliminary data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Overdose deaths linked to synthetic opioids rose 23% from the prior year.

The drug can be ordered easily on social media, delivered to your house like a pizza and not only mixed with heroin and cocaine but also pressed into counterfeit copies of Percocet, [Adderall](#) and Xanax, prescription pills that many young people are familiar with.

Parents are pressing their schools, doctors, coaches and dance instructors to help warn and educate kids about the danger. They’re working to form peer-to-peer student programs that would train volunteers to inform, counsel and possibly administer Naloxone, the medicine that can reverse an opioid overdose. And they are having difficult conversations about fentanyl’s dangers with their children.

“You can’t just tell a kid, ‘Don’t do drugs.’ We’ve been doing that forever and it hasn’t worked,” says Ms. Snow. She has sought advice from a child therapist and recently attended an evening of presentations given by counselors and parents who have [lost a child to fentanyl](#).

She tells her daughters, ages 12 and 14: Don’t borrow or share prescription medications with anyone. You can’t assume that a pill someone gives you came from a pharmacy. It could be made of fentanyl even if it looks exactly like a pill you take, she tells them.

She has formed a pact with a group of friends. They’ve agreed that each will pick up any one of their kids at any time, no questions asked, if the child doesn’t want to call their parents.

Some parents have dramatically changed how they talk to their kids about all drugs, because of the possibility they could contain fentanyl.

In the past, Surrina Plemons, an interior designer who also lives in San Carlos, Calif., says she told her two kids, “Hey, I know you’re a teen and you’re likely to experiment. Don’t snort anything. Don’t shoot anything. Stick to the mellow stuff.” She wanted any experimentation to happen at home.

Because fentanyl is so dangerous and so well-camouflaged in other drugs, she has changed her message. She now tells her two teenagers: “I can’t tell you how much I need you to be safe.” Her role now, she says, is to give them information and the truth.

Carolyn Tucker, a licensed counselor based in Atlanta, says many teens she works with aren’t aware of the dangers of fentanyl. “Ask and they roll their eyes and pooh-pooh it,” she says. “If overdose is even on their radar, they think it happens somewhere else, like at music festivals.”

Parents typically don’t know where their children are likely to encounter the synthetic opioid or how easy it is to get, she says.

She recommends that parents get facts, like local overdose death rates, so they can talk to their kids about fentanyl without sensationalizing it. Find a document that details the dangers. “Have something to put in their hand,” she says. Start the conversation by asking the question: What do you know about fentanyl?

When Martina Chaconas last year asked that question of her then-14-year-old son, he pulled up a menu on social media through which users arrange drug sales by using emojis.

“I was horrified,” says Ms. Chaconas, a Los Angeles-based creative director. “He told me you can order any of that...and they will come deliver it.”

	<p>The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration has published a chart depicting the types of emojis commonly used in online drug deals, including symbols of fake Percocet, Adderall and Xanax commonly laced with fentanyl.</p> <p>Ms. Chaconas is working to start a program in some of the local schools that would train high-school students to educate their peers about fentanyl.</p> <p>Her son has shown no interest in doing drugs, Ms. Chaconas says, but “we ask him about it all the time. I tell him I will trust you until you give me a reason not to.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 EVs proliferate while charging stations lag</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/electric-vehicles-proliferate-while-charging-stations-lag-behind-11653903180?mod=hp_lead_pos4">https://www.wsj.com/articles/electric-vehicles-proliferate-while-charging-stations-lag-behind-11653903180?mod=hp_lead_pos4</a>
GIST	<p>Electric-vehicle sales are accelerating, but U.S. efforts to build a national network of charging stations are moving slowly as states figure out how to fairly dole out public funding to kick-start a new service industry.</p> <p>As the Biden administration <a href="#">prepares to give states \$7.5 billion</a> for new charging stations, a similar recent effort suggests a difficult path is ahead. States received \$424 million that could be used for charging stations as part of a \$2.8 billion settlement by <a href="#">Volkswagen</a> AG to resolve allegations that it cheated on diesel emissions tests. So far, more than four years later, they have spent about 48% of those charging dollars.</p> <p>Six states including Illinois and Connecticut that say they plan to use VW settlement money on chargers have yet to disburse any funds. Four states say they plan to use the money for other projects such as lower-emissions bus fleets, according to data from Atlas Public Policy, a Washington, D.C., research firm that tracks the electric-vehicle industry. Thirty states have distributed most of their available charging money, including Hawaii, New Mexico, South Dakota and New York.</p> <p>Texas gave out \$21 million of the VW money for chargers on a first-come, first-served basis last November. The money was all gone within one minute, records show. Out of 251 applications, two companies won 85% of the funds: Oil giant <a href="#">Shell</a> PLC and Buc-ee's Ltd., a rest-stop chain known for its massive bathrooms and bucktoothed beaver mascot.</p> <p>“We were shocked. And we were, in hindsight, a little slow,” said Kevin Smartt, the chief executive of Austin-based TXB convenience stores, which had hoped to add fast chargers to 12 to 15 existing sites but didn't email quickly enough to receive any of the money.</p> <p>New chargers are needed across the U.S. <a href="#">to meet expected demand</a> as major auto makers from <a href="#">General Motors</a> Co. to <a href="#">Ford Motor</a> Co. <a href="#">speed up their plans to go electric</a> following the success of EV pioneer <a href="#">Tesla</a> Inc. President Biden has signed an executive order calling for half of all cars to be electric or alternative-fuel vehicles by the end of the decade.</p> <p>U.S. sales of EV and plug-in hybrids doubled to more than 600,000 last year, and sales figures show that EVs have reached 6.6% of total cars sold in recent weeks as <a href="#">gasoline prices rise</a> to their highest levels in years, according to Atlas Public Policy.</p> <p>But outside of California, the network of chargers needed to service millions of EVs doesn't exist yet. Environmentalists and auto analysts alike call it a “chicken or the egg” problem and a hurdle to getting more Americans into EVs.</p> <p>While most EV charging happens at home, thousands of public plug-in spots to allow charging are needed in communities that don't have many—or any—chargers. The Biden administration wants 500,000 public chargers by 2030; McKinsey &amp; Co. estimates that as many as 1.2 million are needed.</p>



So far, the U.S. has around 93,000 public chargers, most of which take hours to repower a car, according to government data. [Private investment has thus far fallen short](#), in part because there [aren't enough EVs on the road](#) yet for most charging stations to turn a profit.

Early internal-combustion vehicles faced similar growing pains. Drivers initially bought containers of fuel from pharmacies and hardware stores before gasoline stations and convenience stores emerged as the dominant way to fuel up.

The challenge for states is that public funding for EV charging inherently helps shape early winners and losers in a new market. In Indiana, some critics raised concerns that the state's decision to give \$5.5 million of the VW funding to utilities could help them extend their old electricity monopolies into new markets in the 21st century. State officials said the utilities could build the chargers across most of the priority roadways and at a lower cost per location.

Scot Imus, executive director of the Indiana Food & Fuel Association, said gas stations want to enter the EV-charging market but wonder if they can fairly compete with the utilities they rely on for electricity. "For retailers it's not a profitable opportunity right now," Mr. Imus said.

Fast chargers, which repower a battery in about 30 minutes, are particularly in short supply across the U.S. While market leader Tesla built a fast-charger network for its own drivers, the U.S. has fewer than 5,000 locations with 10,000 individual fast chargers that anyone can use, according to government data. Most current EVs can only travel a few hundred miles before needing to plug in.

When New Hampshire first tried to give out VW money in 2019 for fast charging along highways, it found no takers. "They put so many requirements on it, that all the serious charging companies were like, 'Well, we can't do that,' " said Sam Evans-Brown, executive director of the nonprofit advocacy group Clean Energy New Hampshire.

"That was a learning experience," said Tim White, a supervisor in the air-resources division of the New Hampshire Department of Environmental Services. The state subsequently rolled out a more streamlined grant process and is working on contracts for 35 sites, he said.

Illinois hasn't used any of the money. Gov. J.B. Pritzker, who has set a target to have one million EVs on the road by 2030, this month released revised plans for using untapped VW funds, including spending \$12.7 million for charging.

Mr. Pritzker said his office inherited a lack of coordination on EVs when he took office in 2019 and that the state has a renewed focus on building chargers. "The idea of being a leader in electric-vehicle charging is very important. And in my view, we haven't done enough," he said.

In Texas, the state's round for charger grants left some companies grumbling about the process. "What determined who won these grants wasn't a plan or thoughtful distribution," said Tom Smith, executive director of the Texas Electric Transportation Resources Alliance, a group that advocates for greater EV adoption. "It was bot speed."

Shell made a typo in the email address and had its application bounce back, records show, but timestamps showing it had emailed the moment the grant opened persuaded Texas officials that it had been among the first to apply. Shell said it plans to invest in charging at many of its 13,000 branded retail locations in the U.S., but it didn't respond to a question about the Texas grants.

Texas officials defended the state's process, saying the money was available to such projects statewide. "This process resulted in grants being awarded efficiently," said a spokesman for the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality.



HEADLINE	05/30 Day 96 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-96-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-96-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Russian troops have entered the outskirts of the Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk. Regional governor Serhiy Gaidai has described the fighting as “very fierce”.</b> Gaidai has also appeared on national television in Ukraine to say “Unfortunately we have disappointing news, the enemy is moving into the city.”</li> <li>• “Some 90% of buildings are damaged. More than two-thirds of the city’s housing stock has been completely destroyed. There is no telecommunication,” Ukrainian president <b>Volodymyr Zelenskiy</b> said in a televised speech last night about the status of <b>Sievierodonetsk</b>.</li> <li>• <b>European Union members should be able to reach an agreement on a new sanctions package against Russia</b>, including imposing restrictions on Russian oil imports, during talks being held by officials, according to EU top diplomat <b>Josep Borrell</b>. Zelenskiy is set to address European Union leaders at an emergency summit later on Monday to push for new sanctions against Russia.</li> <li>• <b>Russia’s ministry of defence has claimed it has killed 320 more Ukrainian fighters overnight</b>, as well as striking a shipbuilding plant and destroying 15 tanks located there. They also claim to have shot down 15 Ukrainian drones overnight.</li> <li>• There are reports that five people have died after shelling in the centre of <b>Donetsk</b> by the Ukrainian military. Authorities there claim that a school was targeted. There are also reports of a large explosion in Russian-controlled <b>Melitopol</b>, which has been blamed on Ukrainian saboteurs.</li> <li>• <b>Kirill Stremousov</b>, deputy head of the military-civilian administration that has been imposed on occupied Kherson, has said that grain is being transported from there to Russia.</li> <li>• <b>Russia</b> has likely suffered devastating losses amongst its mid-ranking and junior officers in the conflict, according to the <b>UK ministry of defence</b>.</li> <li>• <b>The “liberation” of the Donbas was an “unconditional priority” for Moscow</b>, Russia’s foreign minister said on Sunday, adding that other Ukrainian territories should decide their future on their own. “The liberation of the Donetsk and Luhansk regions, recognised by the Russian Federation as independent states, is an unconditional priority,” Sergei Lavrov told French TV channel TF1.</li> <li>• <b>Lavrov</b> also denied speculation that President <b>Vladimir Putin</b> is ill. Lavrov said that Putin, who will turn 70 in October, appeared in public “every day”.</li> <li>• <b>French foreign affairs minister Catherine Colonna will meet Zelenskiy in Kyiv later on Monday</b> to express France’s solidarity with <a href="#">Ukraine</a> and offer more support for the country.</li> <li>• On Sunday, <b>Zelenskiy visited troops in Kharkiv</b> and toured the country’s second-largest city to see damage by Russian forces in the Ukrainian president’s first official appearance outside the Kyiv area since the start of the war.</li> <li>• <b>About 31% of the Kharkiv region’s territory is occupied by Russian forces</b> while 5% has been liberated by Ukrainian defenders, the head of Ukraine’s Kharkiv regional military administration.</li> <li>• <b>Nato is no longer bound by past commitments to hold back from deploying its forces in eastern Europe, the US-led alliance’s deputy secretary general has said.</b> Moscow itself has “voided of any content” the Nato-Russia Founding Act, by attacking <a href="#">Ukraine</a> and halting dialogue with the alliance, Mircea Geoana told Agence France-Presse.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	05/30 G7 halts funds fossil fuel overseas projects
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/30/g7-countries-to-stop-funding-fossil-fuel-development-overseas">https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2022/may/30/g7-countries-to-stop-funding-fossil-fuel-development-overseas</a>
GIST	<p>The world’s biggest economies are to stop funding any overseas fossil fuel development from the end of this year, in a move likely to choke off some of the investment in <a href="#">“carbon bombs” that are imperilling efforts</a> to meet the world’s climate targets.</p> <p>The agreement could shift about \$33bn (£26bn) a year from fossil fuels to clean energy sources, according to analysts’ estimates.</p> <p>The energy and environment ministers from all G7 countries agreed at a meeting in Berlin on Friday <a href="#">to end taxpayer funding for oil, gas and coal projects overseas</a>. The member countries are Japan – which held firm</p>

against such a pledge before last year's Cop26 climate summit – the UK, the US, Canada, Italy, France and this year's host country, Germany.

Alok Sharma, the British president of Cop26, said the commitment showed, [in the context of the Ukraine war and high prices of fossil fuels](#), that the transition to clean energy was more important than ever. “We are united in the view that climate and environment security are absolutely synonymous with energy and national security and I cannot overstate that. Solving the global energy crisis and the chronic climate crisis requires the same solution – it's about reducing our dependence on fossil fuels as part of a managed transition.”

Laurie van der Burg, a campaign co-manager at the green group Oil Change International, said: “The G7 committing to end public finance for fossil fuels and shift it to clean [energy] is a massive win. This is a timely reconfirmation [amid the Ukraine war] that the [most viable pathway to energy security](#) is prioritising public finance for clean energy. These promises should now urgently be turned into action.”

Projects that are already under way may escape the new commitment. That means many of the “carbon bombs” – new oil and gas projects around the world that are in development and, if fulfilled, will eliminate any chance of limiting global heating to 1.5C – that [the Guardian uncovered in a recent investigation](#) could still be eligible for such public funding.

The Guardian found nearly 200 carbon bombs, of which about 60% are already under way and have started pumping. [Most of the finance for them](#) is likely to come from private or public sources outside the G7 countries, but overseas public sector finance can be a [significant catalyst for new oil and gas projects](#), as it provides reassurance to private and developing-country investors.

The [G7](#) communique also failed to cover domestic public sector finance for fossil fuels, with some of the member countries still subsidising fossil fuels and providing hefty tax breaks.

On Thursday, the UK announced a windfall tax on fossil fuel companies, with a [loophole that allows them to escape 90% of the levy](#) if they invest in new oil and gas production in the North Sea, despite the UK's carbon budgets. Critics said this would not help alleviate short-term supply issues as new exploration sites can take decades to come into production, and that it amounted to a de facto subsidy worth billions of pounds for new oil and gas.

The G7 [committed last year to end overseas coal financing](#) and some members agreed to end all overseas fossil fuel financing, but this is the first time all seven countries have reached a comprehensive agreement covering all fossil fuels.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Restrictions last time Covid cases so high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/restrictions-place-time-covid-cases-high/story?id=84777860">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/restrictions-place-time-covid-cases-high/story?id=84777860</a>
GIST	<p>Despite widespread vaccination and several available treatments, the U.S. is recording <a href="#">as many COVID-19 cases</a> now at the tail end of the omicron peak as it was last summer during the delta surge.</p> <p>On Wednesday, the latest date for which data is available, 181,000 new infections were reported, according to the <a href="#">Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</a>.</p> <p>Over the last seven days, the country has recorded a total of 766,949 cases of the virus, although the true caseload is likely much higher.</p> <p>This is on par with late August 2021, when the U.S. was recording between 182,000 and 187,000 new infections every day.</p>

However, mitigation measures in the U.S. looked very different at the time. Although there were no lockdowns, several indoor venues mandated masks, vaccine passports were in effect in many large cities and one state even required proof of vaccination or a negative test to enter.

After the omicron wave that swept the country this past winter, an estimated 60% of Americans has been left infected since the start of the pandemic, many with much milder cases -- even though studies suggest omicron is more infectious than delta -- so communities started loosening restrictions.

Although the latest omicron subvariants appear to be even more transmissible than the original variant, a combination of vaccination, boosters and effective and readily available therapeutics appear to have muted the impact of severe disease.

### **Masking indoors**

"When we think about summer 2021, we were in a different place in many ways," Dr. Stuart Ray, a professor of medicine at Johns Hopkins University, told ABC News. "We'd had vaccines for only about six months ... The delta variant became the predominant variant in the U.S. mid-summer."

The delta variant was first identified in March 2021 and quickly took over as the dominant variant, accounting for most U.S. cases during the summer. Before that, the country had been seeing encouraging declines in infections.

By late July 2021, the CDC was urging all Americans in COVID hot spots regardless of vaccination status to wear masks indoors.

At the time, states with high transmissions were mostly in the Southeast, Midwest and Southwest, including Alabama, Florida, Louisiana, Missouri and Texas.

Through summer and fall 2021, some states were still imposing face coverings indoors including schools and even for the vaccinated; however, masks were also still required on public transportation, including in airports and on planes -- a measure that has since been lifted.

Amid increasing COVID-19 cases in recent weeks, some school districts have reimposed mask mandates including in Philadelphia; Brookline, Massachusetts; and Providence, Rhode Island as well as universities such as the University of Delaware and the University of Hawaii, though the vast majority have not.

"Each district and each local health department is going to have to look at their own metrics and decide what the trigger is for bringing back mask mandates," Dr. Michael Smith, a professor of pediatrics and medical director of the pediatric antimicrobial stewardship program at Duke University School of Medicine, told ABC News. "I wish we never had to do it, but they work."

### **Vaccine passports**

Starting in August 2021, New York City became the first city in the U.S. to require venues -- including restaurants, gyms and movie theaters -- [to check for proof of vaccination](#).

Several cities follow suit including Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Minneapolis and St. Paul, New Orleans, Philadelphia and San Francisco.

Currently, no cities have vaccine mandates in place restricting indoor activities and some states have banned requiring vaccination proof altogether.

Florida was the first state to do so in April 2021 and several GOP-led states followed including Arizona, Georgia, Montana and Wyoming.

Ray said even with COVID-19 cases rising, he doesn't see vaccine passports making a return.

"I don't think it's likely that vaccine passports are going to become a widespread measure, in part because they're hard to implement," he said.

He added that people can get around the passport requirement by showing forged vaccination cards and that there is not standardized electronic system to prevent it from happening.

Ray continued, "You would think that we could, but we don't have an electronic system where people could display a QR code on their phone that shows that they have a verifiable vaccine history. Without technology like that, the system is not really in place logistically."

#### **Hawaii's COVID-19 travel restrictions**

Long after states had dropped their COVID-19 measures for domestic travelers in 2020, Hawaii kept its restrictions in place.

American visitors to the islands needed to show either proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test taken one to three days before their departure.

Those who didn't have either were subject to a mandatory 10-day quarantine.

Gov. David Ige announced the state would [drop its so-called Safe Travels Program](#) for domestic travelers on March 26 due to lower cases and hospitalizations but keep rules in place for international travelers.

Dr. Vandana Madhavan, clinical director of pediatric infectious diseases at Massachusetts General Hospital, said that even though increasing COVID infections may lead to the return of mask mandates, not all restrictions will need to return because the country has learned how to better treat and prevent the virus over the last two years.

"We're at a very different point with other preventative measures," she told ABC News. "More people are eligible to get vaccinated and a number of populations are eligible for boosters."

She continued. "Also, we have a number of different options for therapeutics. We have oral and IV options, and options for both people who are at high risk before they get to the hospital and once, they get to the hospital."

Madhavan added that COVID restrictions can be viewed as a "dimmer" that gets "dialed up" when cases rise and "dialed down" once cases fall.

"I view it not as an on and off switch at this point but a dimmer dial," she said. "And so, we may have to dial up for a while, make sure that we're not at the point where we're stressing resources and then we can dial back."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 China small wins but not big Pacific deal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/china-falls-short-on-big-pacific-deal-but-finds-sm/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/china-falls-short-on-big-pacific-deal-but-finds-sm/</a>
GIST	<p>SUVA, Fiji (AP) — China fell short Monday on a bold plan to have 10 Pacific nations endorse a sweeping new agreement covering everything from security to fisheries as some in the region expressed deep concerns.</p> <p>But there have been plenty of smaller wins for China's Foreign Minister Wang Yi as he continues an island-hopping tour of the region.</p> <p>Wang was in Fiji to co-host a key meeting with the foreign ministers from the 10 island nations.</p>

At an unusual news conference afterward, Wang and Fijian Prime Minister Frank Bainimarama spoke for about 30 minutes and then abruptly left the stage as reporters tried to shout out questions. That left many details of what transpired at the meeting undisclosed.

But it was clear the nations hadn't endorsed China's plan.

"As always, we put consensus first among our countries throughout any discussion on new regional agreements," Bainimarama said.

While there have been growing international concerns about Beijing's military and financial ambitions in the region, many Fijians see a benefit in foreign investment wherever it comes from, so long as it uplifts the people.

Georgina Matilda said that working for Chinese infrastructure company China Railway meant that she could put food on the table for her children.

Another Fijian, Miliane Rokolita, said China's increased presence had benefited people.

"They bring us bigger houses. They bring money in Fiji. They're good people," Rokolita said.

Documents obtained by The Associated Press indicate Wang had hoped to get the 10 nations to endorse a pre-written agreement as part of a joint communique after the meeting.

But Wang was unable to get the consensus he'd sought.

David Panuelo, president of the Federated States of Micronesia, told other Pacific leaders he wouldn't endorse the plan, warning them in a letter that it would needlessly heighten geopolitical tensions and threaten regional stability.

Panuelo called it "the single most game-changing proposed agreement in the Pacific in any of our lifetimes" and said it "threatens to bring a new Cold War era at best, and a World War at worst."

During the news conference Monday, Wang listed some areas where the countries had been able to find agreement and said he'd keep working on others.

"After the meeting, China will release its own position paper on our own positions, propositions, and cooperation proposals with Pacific Island countries," Wang said through an interpreter. "And going forward, we will continue to have ongoing and in-depth discussions and consultations to shape more consensus."

While China may have fallen short on its plans for a grand multilateral agreement, it has been signing smaller bilateral agreements with the Pacific nations every day during Wang's tour.

For instance, on Friday Wang visited Kiribati, where a key fishing ground the size of California is at stake. Kiribati's government said afterwards the two nations had signed 10 agreements ranging from cooperating on economic goals to building a specific bridge.

Kiribati's government did not immediately respond to a request by the AP to provide details of the agreements.

In his news conference, Wang said "some have been questioning why China has been so active in supporting Pacific Island countries."

He said China had long championed other developing nations both in the Pacific and around the world, something it had started doing in the 1960s when it helped African nations build railways.

“My advice for those people is: Don’t be too anxious and don’t be too nervous,” Wang said.

After the news conference, China’s ambassador to Fiji Qian Bo took a few questions from reporters, saying there had been “some concerns on specific issues” from some of the 10 nations about the proposed agreement.

“We never impose anything on other countries, let alone to our developing friends and small island countries,” Qian said.

He said China would try to release the position paper mentioned by Wang within about a week. He said parts of the agreement were simply an offer from China to provide assistance to the nations.

A draft of the proposed multilateral agreement obtained by the AP shows that China wants to train Pacific police officers, team up on “traditional and non-traditional security” and expand law enforcement cooperation.

China also wants to jointly develop a marine plan for fisheries - which would include the Pacific’s lucrative tuna catch - increase cooperation on running the region’s internet networks, and set up cultural Confucius Institutes and classrooms. China also mentions the possibility of setting up a free trade area with the Pacific nations.

U.S. Secretary of State Antony Blinken said in a speech Thursday that China posed an even more serious long-term threat than Russia.

“China is the only country with both the intent to reshape the international order - and, increasingly, the economic, diplomatic, military, and technological power to do it,” he said. “Beijing’s vision would move us away from the universal values that have sustained so much of the world’s progress over the past 75 years.”

China hit back, saying the U.S. was spreading disinformation. The aim of Blinken’s speech was to “contain and suppress China’s development and uphold U.S. hegemony,” Chinese Foreign Ministry spokesperson Wang Wenbin said. “We strongly deplore and reject this.”

China says that in the Pacific, cooperation between Beijing and the island nations has been expanding in a development that’s welcomed by those countries.

In Fiji, the economy was hit hard by the coronavirus pandemic. The vital tourism industry shut down overnight and GDP shrank by more than 15%. As the world reopens, Fiji is trying to bounce back, and many are happy to see China write the checks.

China’s involvement in the region doesn’t come completely out of the blue. There has been a long history of Chinese immigration in Fiji, with many Chinese Fijians running corner stores and other businesses.

“There’s a good side and a bad side,” said Nora Nabukete, a student at the University of the South Pacific. “We get more money into the economy, being pumped in and stuff, but then there’s also a side where they bring in a lot of new things that are new to the Fijian culture.”

Nabukete worries about the seedier side that has been associated with Chinese investment in Fiji - a supposed influx of gambling, gangs and drugs.

She said that aligning with China could mean that Fiji creates tension with the United States and other Western nations, and for that reason, she hopes that Fiji doesn’t endorse Wang’s agreement.

“There’s so much more to lose in the future than what we’re experiencing now if Fiji does sign,” she said.



HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Iran-Israel tension ratchets up</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/iran-israel-tension-rises-over-assassination-tehra/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/iran-israel-tension-rises-over-assassination-tehra/</a>
GIST	<p>Tension between Israel and Iran ratcheted higher over the weekend, with Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett saying Tehran can expect to “pay the full price” for backing militant proxies that target Israel and others around the Middle East.</p> <p>Mr. Bennett’s comments Sunday came after a week of threats between the two nations following the May 22 assassination of an Iranian Revolutionary Guards Corps colonel in a mysterious attack in Tehran.</p> <p>Iranian President Ebrahim Raisi made headlines after the killing by vowing revenge for the death of Col. Hassan Sayyad Khodaei. Mr. Raisi hailed the colonel as a martyr and blamed “the hand of global arrogance” for his death — a reference to the United States and its allies, including Israel.</p> <p>While the assassination bore the hallmarks of previous high-profile killings of Iranian officials blamed on Israel, there has been no formal claim of responsibility.</p> <p>However, The New York Times reported on May 25 that Israel had informed American officials it was behind the killing. The Times report cited an anonymous intelligence official who had been briefed on the communication.</p> <p>News reports maintain that Israel has accused Col. Khodaei of having plotted attacks against Israeli citizens worldwide. The colonel is believed to have been killed instantly when he was shot five times in a car by two unidentified gunmen on a motorbike in Tehran.</p> <p>Iran’s semi-official ISNA news agency said members of an Israeli intelligence service network inside Iran had been discovered and arrested immediately after the Khodaei shooting, according to Reuters, which reported on Mr. Bennett’s comments on Sunday.</p> <p>Reuters noted that the Israeli prime minister’s office, which oversees the Israeli intelligence agency Mossad, has declined to comment on the assassination.</p> <p>But in broadcast remarks to his ministers on Sunday, Mr. Bennett accused Iran of repeatedly targeting Israeli interests.</p> <p>“For decades, the Iranian regime has practiced terrorism against Israel and the region by means of proxies, emissaries, but the head of the octopus, Iran itself, has enjoyed immunity,” the prime minister said, according to Reuters.</p> <p>“As we have said before, the era of the Iranian regime’s immunity is over,” Mr. Bennett said. “Those who finance terrorists, those who arm terrorists and those who send terrorists will pay the full price.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Ukraine suffers, pleads for weapons</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/29/ukraine-war-tide-turns/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/29/ukraine-war-tide-turns/</a>
GIST	<p>DONETSK OBLAST, Ukraine — The ambulances hurtled into the parking lot one after the other, each carrying wounded troops directly from the nearby front line. One young man stared straight ahead, his face swollen, his neck and back dripping with blood. Others lay silently under foil blankets.</p> <p>Some stumbled out the back doors and collapsed into wheelchairs as staff members rushed to push them inside. Nearby, bloodied cots sat propped against a tent and other wounded soldiers lingered about, their faces grim, their heads, arms or legs bandaged as the sound of outgoing artillery boomed across the sky.</p> <p>About 10 wounded soldiers arrived at this hospital in eastern Ukraine in less than an hour Sunday morning — the latest military casualties as Ukrainian forces, outgunned by Russia in the country’s east, continue to lose territory at a critical moment in the war.</p>



Soldiers also helped one civilian woman with leg wounds out of a military ambulance.

The Washington Post is withholding the name and precise location of the hospital out of concerns from staff members that it could be targeted by Russian forces.

“Seventy people from my battalion were injured in the last week,” said a soldier and ambulance driver just outside the hospital gates who identified himself only as Vlad, 29. “I lost too many friends; it’s hard for me. I don’t know how many. ... It’s getting worse every day.”

The night before, he said, the shelling was so loud he hardly got any sleep. “It’s all artillery bombing down,” he said. “All the wounded are coming from shrapnel. Most guys in the trenches haven’t even seen the enemy face-to-face.”

Last week, one battalion of young soldiers on a road near Kramatorsk spent their days digging defensive trenches in a pocket not far from the front line.

They were gearing up to provide additional support for the soldiers battling the Russians head-on, preparing for a worst-case scenario in which Russian forces continue or accelerate their current advance. That would be a potential turning point on the battlefield.

It would come at a particularly desperate moment for the Ukrainians. Kyiv is already enraged that some Western voices are floating the idea of ceding territory to Moscow. And the Biden administration is taking weeks to decide whether to provide heavier weaponry that could aid Ukrainian troops at this critical juncture in the war.

“Everyone’s tired,” said Bohdan, a 30-year-old soldier and officer in the battalion who spoke on the condition that only his first name be used and his precise position not be given. “But we are ready to stand and protect until the last man.”

In recent days, Russian troops have captured the towns of Svitlodarsk and Lyman and have closed in on Severodonetsk, a large regional hub, where Russian forces have entered a hotel on the city limits. If Russian troops manage to encircle and take the city, Moscow would occupy nearly all of Ukraine’s easternmost Luhansk region, which makes up roughly half of Donbas.

“I mainly hope the boys don’t get encircled in Severodonetsk,” Bohdan said of his fellow troops. “They need more guns, they need more weapons.”

If he could send one message to Washington, he said, it would be this: “Help us with weapons. The most important is antiaircraft. Close the sky — it’s the civilians who are suffering the most.”

The situation in the country’s east marks a shift from an earlier stage of the war, when staunch Ukrainian defenses forced a broad Russian retreat in Kyiv and other areas, increasing confidence among Ukrainians and their Western backers about the prospects of all-out victory over a poorly organized and equipped Russian force.

Having now regrouped, Russian troops are making incremental but steady progress in their campaign in the east and are regularly employing heavy flamethrowers and long-range artillery that Ukrainian forces lack, leaving Kyiv on the back foot. Though Ukrainian resistance has made the fight a slog for Russian forces, Moscow is inching closer to encircling Ukraine’s biggest strongholds in the Donbas region, while fighting on territory contiguous to Russia with easier supply lines.

In a video address early Saturday, Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said the situation on the battlefield in Donbas was “very difficult,” with Russian forces attacking Ukrainian positions with “maximum artillery and maximum reserves.”

“We are defending our land insofar as the defense resources we have today will allow. We’re doing everything we can to strengthen them — and we will strengthen them,” Zelensky said. “If the occupiers think Severodonetsk or Lyman will be theirs, they are mistaken. Donbas will be Ukrainian.”

For weeks, Zelensky and other top Ukrainian officials have been asking the United States to provide multiple launch rocket systems, or MLRS, which would give Kyiv the ability to strike targets from much farther away and a better chance of resisting the assault in the east.

U.S. officials and congressional staffers told The Post on Friday that the administration is preparing to send the weaponry and could announce the move as early as this week, but the White House must still make a final decision on the transfer.

Some White House officials had expressed concern that providing MLRS weaponry with a range of more than 180 miles would allow Ukrainian forces to hit targets far into Russian territory, potentially prompting an escalatory response from Moscow, but the White House is now comfortable managing that risk by withholding the longest-range ammunition for the system, a senior U.S. official told The Post.

Whether the weaponry will get to Ukrainian forces in time to stave off a significant defeat in the east is now unclear, as Russian forces unleash a wave of attacks with gruesome weaponry on Ukrainian positions, forcing an exodus of people from the country’s embattled easternmost regions.

In an Instagram post on Friday, Andriy Yermak, head of the Ukrainian presidential administration, said Ukrainian forces needed the weaponry “yesterday,” as well as other systems that have been requested, such as air defense systems and tanks.

Outside the hospital Sunday, men who were recently wounded in Severodonetsk lamented the difficult conditions on the ground. “We need more Javelins,” said Lapa, 26, who spoke on the condition that he be identified only by his call sign.

On Saturday, he said, many dead soldiers slain in fighting nearby were carried out. Now, he said, “Ukrainian soldiers are pulling back.”

He was at the hospital to be treated for a fracture in his leg and a wounded arm. Another soldier in his unit, who identified himself as Adik, 41, had broken ribs. A bloody bandage covered the side of his head where he had been hit with shrapnel.

“They’re just raining down metal on us,” Lapa said. Nearby, a 25-year-old with his head wrapped in a bandage puffed on a cigarette. He goes by Koleh and had recently hit a mine, he said, although he didn’t know how exactly he ended up wounded.

Severodonetsk, he added, “is the worst.”

Ukrainians waiting for help away from the front lines are suffering too.

On Saturday, at the train station in the eastern city of Pokrovsk, a hub where civilians have arrived to evacuate from cities across Donbas, four elderly women lay crammed side-by-side in the back of a van, a mix of dirty blankets and pillows covering their frail legs. Underneath, they wore nothing but diapers.

Hours earlier, volunteers had evacuated them from a nursing home in Chasov Yar, a small town less than 50 miles from Severodonetsk. Now, one by one, they moaned and wailed in pain as they were lifted onto pieces of tarp and carried from the van into an evacuation train heading west — a trip their caretakers hoped might save their lives.

“They’re shooting a lot, they’re bombing a lot,” said a woman named Halya, who was 73 and missing the lower half of her right leg. “Now the war has gotten to us and it’s gotten a bit scary.”

Many elderly evacuees — all with red bracelets strapped around their wrists — said they did not know exactly where they were going. One said her family was trapped nearby in occupied territory. Another couldn't speak at all, tears streaming down her face as she grasped the hands of two reporters.

On a main road heading east from the city of Dnipro on Saturday, even a gas station attendant urgently appealed to a Washington Post reporter for more support from the United States — begging for anti-aircraft weapons to help protect her two sons serving on the front line near Donetsk. At a nearby checkpoint, a Virgin Mary statue draped in a Ukrainian flag sat propped up high, another plea posted beneath her: “Pray for Ukraine.”

As Ukrainian forces seek to hold the line, officials in Kyiv have been disheartened to see suggestions from the West that Ukraine should give up part of its territory to satisfy Russian President Vladimir Putin and end the war.

For days, top Ukrainian officials have been fending off suggestions from European leaders, former secretary of state Henry Kissinger and the New York Times editorial board that Kyiv should enter talks with Russia and make concessions.

French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz have been pushing peace talks, and top Italian officials submitted a peace plan to the United Nations that would freeze the current front lines, leading to a significant loss of territory for Ukraine.

Ukrainian officials believe that any concessions to satisfy Putin now will only lead to Russia regrouping and launching a far more vicious war against Ukraine in the future.

Mykhailo Podolyak, an adviser to Zelensky, told The Post that the Ukrainian government refuses any plan other than a military loss for Russia on the battlefield.

“If Russia doesn't lose, they won't have any internal transformation,” Podolyak said. “A Russia that doesn't lose will, on the contrary, be more chauvinist and have an even more revanchist outlook, because they will hate us for humiliating them in front of the rest of the world ... and, accordingly, in two years they will come back and kill us even more brutally.”

Zelensky, who said Kissinger was living in 1938 — a reference to attempts to appease Adolf Hitler before World War II — chided “great geopoliticians” trying to give away parts of Ukraine in a post on Instagram on Saturday, saying they were unwilling to see the people who live in those territories as real people.

“Ordinary Ukrainians. Millions of those who actually live in the territory they propose to exchange for the illusion of peace,” Zelensky said. “You must always see people. And remember that values are not just a word.”

In Pokrovsk, many of those people rushed to board the evacuation train, some carrying animals or children. One young couple held each other close — then kissed before the woman took her seat inside, leaving the man on the platform to watch her through the window.

They stayed on the phone until the train pulled out of the station — not knowing if or when they might see one another again.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Moscow: east Ukraine ‘absolute priority’</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/30/russia-ukraine-war-news-live-updates/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/30/russia-ukraine-war-news-live-updates/</a>
GIST	Heavy fighting continues between Russian and Ukrainian forces on the streets of Severodonetsk, one of the last Ukrainian-held cities in the country's eastern Luhansk region. Russian troops now control a strip of around 100 meters, head of the district administration said.

	<p>Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky said 90 percent of the city’s buildings and all of its “critical infrastructure” have been destroyed as officials say Moscow is using air support for its assault.</p> <p>Moscow has focused its recent efforts on eastern Ukraine, with Russian Foreign Minister Sergei Lavrov calling the Donetsk and Luhansk regions Moscow’s “absolute priority.” At the same time, Ukraine’s military announced offensive operations in the southeast, outside of Kherson, which they said put Russian forces on the defensive.</p> <p>In Monday morning talks, E.U. ambassadors once again failed to reach a deal to phase out imports of oil from Russia due to ongoing opposition from Hungary, keeping the issue on the E.U.’s agenda — and Russian oil flowing — for at least another day.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 NKorea reports increase in Covid cases</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/30/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases?name=stylncoronavirus&amp;region=hub&amp;block=storyline_live_updates_block_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=LegacyCollection#north-korea-reports-increase-in-cases-despite-its-claim-to-have-the-virus-under-control">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/30/world/covid-19-mandates-vaccine-cases?name=stylncoronavirus&amp;region=hub&amp;block=storyline_live_updates_block_recirc&amp;action=click&amp;pgtype=LegacyCollection#north-korea-reports-increase-in-cases-despite-its-claim-to-have-the-virus-under-control</a>
GIST	<p>SEOUL — North Korea reported an increase in suspected new cases of Covid-19 on Monday, a day after its government claimed to have the pandemic under control.</p> <p>North Korea’s leader, Kim Jong-un, convened the Political Bureau of his ruling Workers’ Party on Sunday and heard “a positive evaluation of the pandemic situation being controlled and improved across the country,” according to state media. But on Monday, the country reported 100,710 suspected new cases, more than the 89,500 reported a day earlier.</p> <p>North Korea declared a “<a href="#">maximum emergency</a>” on May 12, acknowledging a Covid-19 outbreak for the first time and <a href="#">locking down</a> all the cities and counties. It said <a href="#">the outbreak</a> began in late April, and that its daily caseload of suspected patients peaked at 390,000, which it reported on May 16. But over the weekend, the reported caseload dipped below 100,000, and the government began saying that it had brought the pandemic under control.</p> <p>Outside experts <a href="#">have cast doubt</a> on the figures announced by North Korea, however.</p> <p>The country measures its Covid outbreak by the number of people found with fevers, not by the number of people who have actually tested positive with the virus, because it lacks testing kits and labs. It said that only 70 people have died, although more than 3.5 million people have been found to have had fevers since last April. Its fatality rate, 0.002 percent, is among the lowest in the world, lower than the 0.13 percent reported in South Korea.</p> <p>South Korea’s National Intelligence Service said it suspected that the North Koreans found with fevers may include people with diseases like pertussis, measles and typhoid, rather than solely the coronavirus.</p> <p>The intelligence agency told South Korean lawmakers that North Korea’s <a href="#">recent tests of three missiles</a> was in part to demonstrate its confidence that it could overcome the outbreak without internal instability or outside aid. North Korea has refused to accept offers from South Korea, the United States and world health organizations to provide vaccines. The only aid it has accepted is emergency Covid medication from China, which it distributed to the elites living in its capital, Pyongyang, the agency said.</p> <p>“There is a big gap in medical services between Pyongyang and the rest of the country,” Kim Tae-hyo, a deputy national security adviser for President Moon Jae-in of South Korea, said last week. On Monday, the South Korean government said it could not confirm news reports that North Korea may have partly lifted the lockdown in Pyongyang.</p>

	<p>“If you take the North Korean figures at face value, the situation there seems to be improving,” said Cho Joong-hoon, spokesman of the South’s Unification Ministry. “But we can’t say for sure, because we don’t know how the North has come up with its data.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 States rush toward new gun restrictions</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/29/us/states-gun-restrictions.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20News">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/29/us/states-gun-restrictions.html?action=click&amp;module=Well&amp;pgtype=Homepage&amp;section=US%20News</a>
GIST	<p>SACRAMENTO — Congress failed to impose gun restrictions after the school massacres in Newtown, Conn., and Parkland, Fla., and there’s little confidence that 21 deaths at an elementary school in Uvalde, Texas, will change matters now.</p> <p>But states aren’t waiting.</p> <p>In New Jersey, Gov. Phil Murphy urged lawmakers to advance firearms safety measures, including raising the age to 21 for purchases of long guns and exposing gun makers to civil lawsuits.</p> <p>In New York — where an 18-year-old in Buffalo was charged two weeks ago with <a href="#">committing a racist mass shooting</a> — Gov. Kathy Hochul said she would seek to ban people under 21 from purchasing AR-15-style rifles.</p> <p>And in California — where a politically motivated <a href="#">mass shooting erupted</a> at a luncheon of older churchgoers this month — legislative leaders and Gov. Gavin Newsom fast-tracked tougher controls on firearms.</p> <p>“We are getting a lot of inquiries even though a lot of state legislatures are out of session,” Nico Bocour, director of government affairs for the anti-gun-violence group Giffords, said after the Uvalde shooting. “In the wake of a lot of inaction by Congress, states want to step up and keep people safe.”</p> <p>In Republican-controlled statehouses, however, the moves evoked an equal and opposite reaction. A day after Uvalde, rural conservatives in <a href="#">Pennsylvania</a> and <a href="#">Michigan</a> beat back Democratic attempts to force votes on long-blocked gun safety legislation.</p> <p>And in Texas, Gov. Greg Abbott and other Republican officials blamed the school massacre on a gunman with mental health problems, not gun laws. They accused Democrats of politicizing the situation with calls for gun control.</p> <p>“Anybody who shoots somebody else has a mental health challenge, period,” Mr. Abbott said a day after the Uvalde shooting.</p> <p>The state actions come as hope for congressional consensus has waned to a flicker, not only on gun violence, but on an array of American social issues. As polarized politics repeatedly trump compromise in a narrowly divided Congress, liberal and conservative states have enacted <a href="#">disparate and often opposing agendas</a>, erecting a patchwork of policies on a range of issues, including abortion and civil rights.</p> <p>Since 2019, federal legislation to expand criminal background checks for gun purchases has twice passed the House only to languish amid Senate Republican opposition. On Thursday, a <a href="#">small, bipartisan group of senators</a> said they would work through the weekend in a search for common ground.</p> <p>“We beg you,” a group of school principals who survived past campus shootings wrote in a <a href="#">letter</a> that was expected to appear as a full-page ad in The Washington Post on Sunday. “Do something. Do anything.”</p> <p>But as they publicly mourned the tragedy in Uvalde, <a href="#">Republican senators showed scant signs that they had budged</a>. And few believe that gridlocked Washington will accomplish much after seeing the <a href="#">same script</a> play out before. The one modest proposal that seemed to show promise would kick decisions to</p>

statehouses: It would offer incentives for states to pass “red flag” laws aimed at keeping guns out of the hands of people who are mentally ill.

[Roughly three in five](#) state legislatures are Republican-controlled, but calls for action on gun violence have run high in the aftermath of Uvalde’s devastation. In Texas, where the National Rifle Association went ahead with a scheduled convention three days after the school shooting, the issue surfaced almost immediately in the governor’s race.

As authorities were still processing the crime scene, former Democratic Representative Beto O’Rourke — who is challenging Mr. Abbott — interrupted the governor’s news conference to charge that the Republican had “done nothing” to protect Texans from gun violence.

“Somebody needs to stand up for the children of this state,” Mr. O’Rourke called to audience members as he was escorted from the gathering, “or they will continue to be killed.”

Last year, Texas passed a law allowing virtually anyone over the age of 21 to carry a handgun without a permit, making it the most populous among nearly a dozen states that have shunned most restrictions on the ability to carry handguns.

Mr. Abbott was scheduled to appear at the N.R.A. convention in Houston before deciding instead to send a video address and travel to Uvalde. But the state’s Republican officials seemed disinclined to tighten gun laws.

Lt. Gov. Dan Patrick suggested that, instead of restricting guns, school security and mental health care should be improved. But there [remain serious questions](#) about whether popular school-based security measures work against mass shootings, particularly when the attacker uses high-powered weapons. And in the Uvalde shooting, the school district had its own police force and school shooting plan, while the gunman was apparently never flagged for mental illness.

Nationally, a majority of Americans have supported stricter gun laws for decades, polls show. A [Politico/Morning Consult poll](#) conducted this week showed [overwhelming support](#) among Americans for background checks, a ban on assault-style weapons and other gun restrictions.

But spikes in demand for gun control that occur after mass shootings also tend to [revert to the partisan mean](#) as time passes. The same poll also reported that a slim majority of Americans support arming teachers — a solution touted this week by [the Gun Owners of America](#).

America’s long, bitter fight over guns has hardened lines to the point that refusing to compromise on the Second Amendment has become [part of the identity of the Republican Party](#). The United States Supreme Court’s rightward shift on hot-button cultural issues has further [emboldened Republican legislatures](#) to pass conservative social policies once viewed as too extreme by courts and Congress — and prompted Democratic-led states to respond in kind.

After the Supreme Court in December preserved a Texas law encouraging private lawsuits against anyone who helps terminate a pregnancy after six weeks, California’s governor proposed [parallel legislation](#) to incentivize lawsuits against anyone who traffics in banned firearms.

At the time, Mr. Newsom’s [social media call](#) was seen as an impulsive retort that lawmakers weren’t sure whether to take seriously, as it came on a Saturday evening and ran counter to his previous view of the Constitution. It is now the foundation for the California bill that has drawn the most attention this week.

Also this week, a federal court upheld a New York law — the first of its kind in the nation — allowing civil lawsuits to be filed against firearm manufacturers and dealers. [Passed last year](#), it is aimed at circumventing the broad immunity long enjoyed by gun companies. Other states have expressed interest, including New Jersey, where Governor Murphy called for a similar law last month.

But Republicans may look to other courts, particularly the Supreme Court, to block state laws on gun control after former President Donald J. Trump appointed a wave of conservative federal judges. This month, a panel of the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Ninth Circuit ruled that a state ban on sales of semiautomatic rifles to adults under 21 [was unconstitutional](#).

Despite that decision, Governor Hochul announced Wednesday that she would seek to prevent people “not old enough to buy a legal drink” from purchasing AR-15-style rifles.

“We are not only leaning heavily on state legislatures now, but we have been for the past 10 years, particularly since the Sandy Hook massacre,” said Rebecca Fischer, executive director of New Yorkers Against Gun Violence, referring to the 2012 elementary school shooting in Newtown that killed 26 people. “Strategically, we understood as advocates that we needed to be working with our state legislators to see real change, and that is where there has been most meaningful change.”

Research indicates that California’s approach has constrained gun deaths.

The state’s rate of firearm mortality is among the nation’s lowest, with 8.5 gun deaths per 100,000 people in 2020, compared to 14.2 per 100,000 in Texas, according to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#). A more recent [analysis](#) by the Public Policy Institute of California found that Californians were about 25 percent less likely to die in mass shootings, compared to citizens of other states.

Even so, New York and other states pursuing strict gun laws are, in many ways, hampered by the lack of a coherent gun policy from Congress and the flow of illegal firearms from states with looser laws. [Research shows](#) that gun crimes in states with tough restrictions are often committed with firearms from more permissive states.

“California leads this national conversation,” Mr. Newsom said in the State Capitol alongside Democratic state lawmakers. “When California moves, other states move in the same direction.”

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HEADLINE	05/30 For NATO, Turkey disruptive ally
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/us/politics/turkey-nato-russia.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/us/politics/turkey-nato-russia.html</a>
GIST	<p>WASHINGTON — When President Recep Tayyip Erdogan of Turkey threatened this month to block NATO membership for Finland and Sweden, Western officials were exasperated — but not shocked.</p> <p>Within an alliance that operates by consensus, the Turkish strongman has come to be seen as something of a stickup artist. In 2009, he blocked the appointment of a new NATO chief from Denmark, complaining that the country was too tolerant of cartoons of the Prophet Muhammad and too sympathetic to “Kurdish terrorists” based in Turkey. It took hours of cajoling by Western leaders, and a face-to-face promise from President Barack Obama that NATO would appoint a Turk to a leadership position, to satisfy Mr. Erdogan.</p> <p>After a rupture in relations between Turkey and Israel the next year, Mr. Erdogan prevented the alliance from working with the Jewish state for six years. A few years later, Mr. Erdogan delayed for months a NATO plan to fortify Eastern European countries against Russia, again citing Kurdish militants and demanding that the alliance declare ones operating in Syria to be terrorists. In 2020, Mr. Erdogan sent a gas-exploration ship backed by fighter jets close to Greek waters, causing France to send ships in support of Greece, also a NATO member.</p> <p>Now the Turkish leader is back in the role of obstructionist, and is once again invoking the Kurds, as he charges that Sweden and Finland sympathize with the Kurdish militants he has made his main enemy.</p> <p>“These countries have almost become guesthouses for terrorist organizations,” he said this month. “It is not possible for us to be in favor.”</p>



Mr. Erdogan's stance is a reminder of a long-festering problem for NATO, which currently has 30 members. Russia's invasion of Ukraine may have given the alliance a new sense of mission, but NATO must still contend with an authoritarian leader willing to use his leverage to gain political points at home by blocking consensus — at least for a time.

It is a situation that plays to the advantage of President Vladimir V. Putin of Russia, who has grown friendlier with Mr. Erdogan in recent years. For the Russian leader, the rejection of Swedish and Finnish admission into NATO would be a significant victory.

The quandary would be simpler were it not for Turkey's importance to the alliance. The country joined NATO in 1952 after aligning with the West against the Soviet Union; Turkey gives the alliance a crucial strategic position at the intersection of Europe and Asia, astride both the Middle East and the Black Sea. It hosts a major U.S. air base where American nuclear weapons are stored, and Mr. Erdogan has blocked Russian warships headed toward Ukraine.

But under Mr. Erdogan, Turkey has increasingly become a problem to be managed. As prime minister and then as president, he has tilted his country away from Europe while practicing an authoritarian and populist brand of Islamist politics, especially since a failed coup attempt in 2016.

He has purchased an advanced missile system from Russia that NATO officials call a threat to their integrated defense systems, and in 2019 he mounted a military incursion to battle Kurds in northern Syria who were aiding the fight against the Islamic State with U.S. support.

"In my four years there, it was quite often 27 against one," said Ivo H. Daalder, a U.S. ambassador to NATO during the Obama administration, when the alliance had 28 members.

Mr. Erdogan's objections to the membership of Sweden and Finland have even renewed questions about whether NATO might be better off without Turkey.

An opinion essay this month that was co-written by Joseph I. Lieberman, a former independent U.S. senator from Connecticut, argued that Mr. Erdogan's Turkey would flunk the alliance's standards for democratic governance in prospective new member states. The essay, published by The Wall Street Journal, warned that Ankara's policies, including a coziness with Mr. Putin, had undermined NATO's interests and that the alliance should explore ways of ejecting Turkey.

"Turkey is a member of NATO, but under Mr. Erdogan it no longer subscribes to the values that underpin this great alliance," wrote Mr. Lieberman and Mark D. Wallace, the chief executive of the Turkish Democracy Project, a group critical of Mr. Erdogan.

Some members of Congress have said as much. "Turkey under Erdogan should not and cannot be seen as an ally," Senator Bob Menendez of New Jersey, the top Democrat on the Senate Foreign Relations Committee, said after Turkey's 2019 incursion into Syria.

But NATO is a military alliance, and Turkey, with the second-largest army in the organization, an advanced defense industry and its crucial geographic position, plays a vital role.

Western officials say that Turkey would only cause more problems as a resentful NATO outsider — and one that could align itself more closely with Russia.

"Turkey has undermined its own image," said Alper Coskun, a former Turkish diplomat who is now a senior fellow at the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. But, he added, "it is still a critical member of the alliance."

Once again, the question is what will mollify Mr. Erdogan and ensure his support for admitting Sweden and Finland.

President Biden underscored U.S. support for the move when he hosted the two nations' leaders at the White House this month and praised a larger NATO as a check against Russian power. "Biden took an extremely exposed, high-visibility position by inviting them to Washington," said James F. Jeffrey, a U.S. ambassador to Turkey during the Obama administration.

Most analysts believe that Mr. Erdogan will not ultimately block the accession of Sweden and Finland, but that he wants to highlight Turkey's own security concerns and make domestic political gains before elections in his country next year.

Mr. Erdogan is mainly concerned with Sweden's longtime support for the Kurdistan Workers' Party, or P.K.K., which seeks an independent Kurdish state on territory partly within Turkey's borders.

The P.K.K., which has attacked nonmilitary targets and killed civilians in Turkey, is outlawed in that country and is designated by both the United States and the European Union as a terrorist organization, although some governments, including Sweden, view it more sympathetically as a Kurdish nationalist movement.

The United States has also backed its affiliated fighters in Syria, the Y.P.G., or People's Protection Units, who helped to battle the Islamic State and whom Mr. Erdogan attacked in his 2019 incursion into the country.

The Turkish president wants the Y.P.G. to be designated as a terrorist group as well.

Mr. Erdogan accuses both Finland and Sweden of harboring followers of Fethullah Gulen, a Turkish cleric living in U.S. exile, whom he blames for the 2016 coup. Turkey is requesting the extradition of roughly 35 people it says are involved with Kurdish separatists or Mr. Gulen.

Mr. Erdogan also objects to Swedish and Finnish arms embargoes against his country, which were imposed after the 2019 incursion into Syria. Sweden is already discussing lifting the embargo given current events in Ukraine.

Some analysts say that Mr. Erdogan's government views the P.K.K. much the way Washington saw Al Qaeda 20 years ago, and that the West cannot dismiss the concerns if it hopes to do business with Turkey.

Biden administration officials downplay the standoff and expect Mr. Erdogan to reach a compromise with Finland and Sweden. Turkish officials met in Ankara with Finnish and Swedish counterparts for several hours last week.

Julianne Smith, the U.S. ambassador to NATO, said in an interview that "this appears to be an issue that they have with Sweden and Finland, so we'll leave it in their hands." She added that the United States would provide assistance if needed.

Appearing with Finland's foreign minister in Washington on Friday, Secretary of State Antony J. Blinken said he was "confident that we will work through this process swiftly, and that things will move forward with both countries."

Emre Peker, a London-based director for Europe at the Eurasia Group, a private consulting firm, said that he did not believe that Mr. Erdogan was seeking concessions from Washington. He expressed confidence that Turkey could work out an agreement with Sweden and Finland with the mediation of the NATO secretary general, Jens Stoltenberg.

Mr. Erdogan's main priorities are getting his country's security concerns about Kurdish separatists heard and getting the arms embargoes lifted, Mr. Peker said.

Some American analysts are skeptical. Eric S. Edelman, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and Finland, warned that Mr. Erdogan could be seeking to curry favor with Mr. Putin — or at least ease the anger in Moscow over the sale of lethal drones to Ukraine’s military by a private Turkish company.

“He has this very complicated relationship with Putin that he has to maintain,” Mr. Edelman said. “This is a good way of throwing a little bone to Putin — ‘I’m still useful to you.’”

Others believe the Turkish leader wants a payoff from Washington. Mr. Erdogan is angry that the United States denied Turkey access to the F-35 stealth fighter after his 2017 purchase of the Russian S-400 missile system. Turkey is now lobbying instead to buy enhanced F-16 fighters but has met stiff resistance in Congress from the likes of Mr. Menendez.

Mr. Erdogan may also be seeking presidential attention. He had a friendly rapport with President Donald J. Trump, but Mr. Biden has kept his distance.

“This is a man who needs to be at center stage,” said Mr. Daalder, the former U.S. ambassador to NATO. “This is a way to say: ‘Hey, I’m still here. You need to pay attention to my issues.’”

Mr. Peker believes that an agreement can be negotiated between Turkey and the Nordic countries before a NATO summit in Madrid next month, which would allow for the accession protocols to be signed there.

More likely, some analysts say, Mr. Biden will have to make a nod toward Mr. Erdogan in Madrid to clinch his assent, as Mr. Obama had to do at a NATO summit in 2009 to secure the appointment of Anders Fogh Rasmussen as secretary general.

At a talk hosted by the Council on Foreign Relations last week, Representative Adam Smith, Democrat of Washington and the chairman of the House Armed Services Committee, suggested that the stakes of Swedish and Finnish membership were great enough to warrant direct U.S. involvement.

“We need to sit down and we need to cut a deal,” Mr. Smith said. “And we need to get aggressive about it, like now.”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Seattle food bank faces surge in demand</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/rainier-valley-food-bank-sees-surge-in-demand-due-to-rising-prices">https://www.q13fox.com/news/rainier-valley-food-bank-sees-surge-in-demand-due-to-rising-prices</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - Rising prices at the grocery store are not just affecting the families shopping there—it is also impacting local food banks, which are straining under the costs and facing even greater demand for food.</p> <p>Deliveries were flying out the door of the Rainier Valley Food Bank on Saturday, as volunteer drivers lined up to pick up grocery bags for those in need.</p> <p>"I like to be around people that are always helping, because I was raised like that," said Lawrence Odom, a longtime food bank volunteer.</p> <p>Lawrence said working at the food bank is good for the soul. He said in tough times, acts of service keep him going.</p> <p>"Mostly I like to be around people and see people do good and try to make it in this world, because the world isn't what it used to be," said Lawrence.</p> <p>For many, times have gotten tougher financially.</p> <p>"The need has been incredible," said Otis Pimpleton, another volunteer.</p>

Pimpleton said even before COVID, the need was increasing.

"Everybody needs food now, and you know, we are really busy trying to get it to them," said Otis. "Even before COVID and all this stuff, the need was growing every year."

Otis said rising prices have also taken a bite out of people's budgets.

The food bank cited the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which recently reported a 9-16% spike in food costs. Workers at the food bank say it affects everyone across all income levels, and it has caused a surge in demand for Rainier Valley Food Bank.

"Inflation definitely really does play a role," said Otis.

"One of the things that is exasperating is the inflation rate, but also when the stimulus checks ran out—folks that maybe could get by without coming to the food bank, found that they needed to come to the food bank," said Gloria Hatcher-Mays, Executive Director for Rainier Valley Food Bank.

The food bank reports an increase in customer visits year over year in 2022. During the soft re-open to 'in-person shopping,' where clients pick their own items, around 180 people showed up, with only 20 invites going out.

The food bank estimates that 500 to 600 could show up per day when 'shopping days' fully reopen.

"We view our service as one that helps a monthly budget stabilize, that you can use the food bank for a safety valve for your expenses every month." said Gloria.

Otis said the food bank has also gotten creative in working around rising food prices in its own budget.

"There is a bunch of stuff I like to order that is just astronomically priced. We are still getting a lot of good food here, but we have to be selective when we buy it, getting it when it's in season, and stuff like that," said Otis.

"We moved from a tiny location to this nice big location," said Gloria. "It is expensive, and we are looking to do some further refinements here, so we can expand our programing."

Gloria hopes to expand services in the future.

"We are definitely looking to see if the community will continue to support our growth here," said Gloria. "It's very important to us. The work we do is very important to the community. So, I just want to emphasize how lucky we are to have found this place and how much we are hopeful the community will continue to support."

The food bank also had free showers on site Saturday for those in need.

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HEADLINE	05/28 Unofficial summer start: rising Covid cases
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/05/28/covid-memorial-day-surge/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/health/2022/05/28/covid-memorial-day-surge/</a>
GIST	<p>For the third year, Americans are greeting the unofficial start of summer shadowed by the specter of the coronavirus amid rising COVID-19 cases and hospitalizations across the country.</p> <p>The United States is recording more than 100,000 infections a day – at least five times higher than this point last year – as it confronts the most transmissible versions of the virus yet. Immunity built up as a result of the record winter outbreak appears to provide little protection against the latest variants, new research shows. And public health authorities are bracing for Memorial Day gatherings to fuel another bump in cases, potentially seeding a summer surge.</p>

It's a far cry from a year ago, with predictions of a "hot vax summer" uninhibited by COVID concerns. Back then, coronavirus seemed to teeter on the brink of defeat as cases plummeted to their lowest levels since spring 2020 and vaccines became widely available for adults. Even the vaccinated and boosted now grudgingly accept the virus as a formidable foe that's here to stay as governments abandon measures to contain it.

As the virus morphs and the scientific understanding of how it operates shifts with each variant, Americans are drawing their own lines for what they feel comfortable doing.

"This time last year, I was so hopeful," said Margaret Thornton, a 35-year-old Philadelphia researcher preparing to spend her summer socializing mostly outdoors because of her weakened immune system. "Now, I don't know when it's going to be over, and I don't think there is necessarily a light at the end of the tunnel. Or rather, if there is a light, is it an opening to get out? Or is it a train?"

Parents of children too young to be vaccinated are making cross-country travel plans. Octogenarians are venturing to bars. And families are celebrating graduations and weddings with throngs of mostly unmasked revelers – mindful they may get sick. Again.

More than half of the U.S. population is living in areas classified as having medium or high COVID-19 levels by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The latest cases have yet to overrun hospitals, but that could change as the virus spreads among more vulnerable people. The dominant strains circulating in the United States are the most contagious thus far.

"This one is really revved up, and it's probably getting up there with something as transmissible as measles," said Peter Hotez, dean of the National School of Tropical Medicine at Baylor College, describing the BA.2.12.1 subvariant now accounting for more than half of new cases. "Over the Memorial Day holidays, if you are in settings where you are indoors with large numbers of people without masks . . . there is a good likelihood you will suffer a breakthrough infection."

Experts had hoped that the explosion of the omicron variant this winter, estimated to have infected a quarter of Americans who hadn't already been infected, and the subsequent spring wave of omicron's even more transmissible subvariants, would provide a buffer against future surges.

But an emerging body of research suggests those infections will not confer lasting protection as the virus's latest iterations show remarkable ability to escape immunity. Experts say the recently infected who also received booster shots can count on at least several months of immunity, while the unvaccinated should expect little protection.

"You should not think, 'Oh, I had omicron, I don't need any shots' or 'I don't need any more shots,'" said Melanie Ott, director of the Gladstone Institute of Virology and a co-author of a paper recently published in *Nature* finding limited natural immunity from the omicron variant. "We are going into a surge of the omicron subvariants that are more and more able to infect people who have preexisting immunity."

Experts say vaccines are still showing durability in protecting people against severe illness. But the initial burst of antibodies from shots or infections fades after several months, said Celine Gounder, an infectious-diseases specialist and senior fellow at Kaiser Health News. That means the virus can develop into an infection before the body's immune system kicks in.

Burhan Yardimci, his wife and their three young children – who had all contracted coronavirus in February – joined thousands of Turkish Americans on Madison Avenue recently for the return of New York's annual Turkish Day Parade, canceled the last two years because of the pandemic. The next day, the family stood among another crowd of thousands for the Celebrate Israel Parade.

Yardimci doesn't take much solace in his recent infection as an extra layer of protection. He thought his booster shot would stop infections, but he knows people who've had the virus three times. Because no one in his family became seriously ill, he doesn't see the need to upend his life when everyone around him appears to be carrying on as normal.

"Hopefully, we'll never get it again," said Yardimci, 42.

In the Boston suburbs, Mandy Boyd found herself humbled by coronavirus after getting infected twice in five months: during the massive omicron wave in January, and again in May after attending a 150-person indoor wedding. Neither case was severe.

The experience left the 35-year-old health technology worker reassessing how to protect her 4- and 6-year-old children from infections that would disrupt their schooling or summer camp. She still plans to dine out and go to the gym, but her family will wear masks on their flight to Seattle for an upcoming vacation as well as when they watch a WNBA game while there. She worries about passing on a future variant to her children, even if her short-term immunity protects her from getting sick.

"We're in a strange spot because it turned into a much more minor virus," said Boyd of Swampscott, Mass. "From that perspective, I don't see that the world should stop or schools should close."

Graduations, proms and weddings have also returned after being canceled in earlier stages of the pandemic when cases were lower than they are now.

Adeline Rosales, 26, was among the hundreds of California State University Long Beach students in caps and gowns flooding into Angel Stadium in Anaheim on a recent morning. It was her first encounter with some classmates in the College of Health and Human Services who were only familiar as faces on a computer screen during virtual class. She felt comfortable marching alongside them through a tunnel and onto the field knowing the university required vaccines and booster shots. And it was important for her relatives to celebrate the occasion with her because she is the first in the family to graduate college.

But to avoid graduation crowds, she said the family waited several days for their celebratory dinner because they were "a little scared" as infections rose and Los Angeles County moved from a low to medium COVID-19 risk level. Rosales lives with her parents, both of whom have preexisting conditions, and six other relatives.

"I don't want to risk it at this point," Rosales said. "We're just trying to be as respectful to my parents as possible."

For most Americans, coronavirus has faded from the foreground.

More than half say they are not too concerned or not at all concerned with coronavirus, according to a May survey by Monmouth University.

Nearly three-quarters say they hope to vacation this summer and less than a third say coronavirus is a major factor in their plans, according to a recent Washington Post-Schar School poll. The Transportation Security Administration on Thursday reported screening more than half a million additional fliers a day compared with the same day last year.

Experts are paying close attention to the Southeast for a potential COVID resurgence because the region did not experience as many cases in the spring as the Northeast, and rising temperatures are driving people indoors.

Florida residents are bracing for the return of another summer surge in sharply different ways.

For Jeff Schulte, a 63-year-old retiree, coronavirus has never really gone away, and he sees no reason to change his behavior for an omnipresent threat. He is not planning on masking, social distancing or getting booster shots this summer.

“For the rest of our lives, it’s here,” he said while smoking a cigarette outside the library in downtown Sarasota. “It’s going to catch every one of us.”

To the north near Tampa, Rick Kilby, 57, donned a KN95 mask as he hawked his book about the Victorian-era belief in the healing properties of Florida springs at Floridania Fest in a Gulfport casino ballroom. Mostly unmasked attendees snaked past his table, conveniently situated near an open door that brought in fresh air.

He’s not worried about getting seriously ill after a second booster shot. But after hearing about five vaccinated friends getting infected in just two days, he does fret about having to cancel his upcoming trip to western Pennsylvania – the only vacation he had planned for the year.

“It’s not like it was two years ago where you are really concerned about going to the hospital and not getting out. Now, it’s more of a concern that this is going to be a real inconvenience to my schedule,” said Kilby, who lives in Orlando. “That’s the wonder of the vaccine. It made it from a life-threatening condition to one that’s really more like having a flu or cold or something.”

Others at the vintage Florida memorabilia festival feared worse consequences.

Patti Kane-Wood, 78, entered the expo wearing a blue surgical mask but felt uncomfortable by how attendees “were squeezed in there like sardines” and didn’t stay long. She has heard about more people getting COVID in the last month than in the last two years. While she feels well-protected from getting her second booster dose, she worries about long-term complications after watching friends develop persistent breathing problems following their illnesses. A recent study found vaccines may offer little protection against most long-COVID symptoms.

“If I catch COVID, even the slightest case of COVID, it’s possible I have long COVID and have issues for the rest of my life,” Kane-Wood said. “I’m very afraid because people are very relaxed now and understandably so, but it’s not a time to let our guard down.”

Parents of young children are entering Memorial Day weekend frustrated that children younger than 5 remain the only group ineligible for vaccines. The prospect of regulators clearing shots by the end of June is becoming increasingly likely after Pfizer-BioNTech reported data showing their three-dose regimen proved 80 percent effective in preventing symptomatic infections in children 6 months to 4 years old.

In the meantime, parents are navigating how to protect their unvaccinated children when cases are rising and others are dropping their guards.

In Portland, Oregon, Jessica Poole said she is not taking her 5-year-old daughter, Lucía, and 3-year-old son, Max, to indoor play facilities, where Lucía would catch illnesses even before COVID. She asks Lucía to wear a mask while she’s at prekindergarten. And the family isn’t planning any travel, because Max is too young to get vaccinated.

But Poole, 37, is not trying to avoid the virus at all costs.

“Whatever strain is going around now, you can’t be too terrified of it,” Poole said outside a CrossFit gym where she planned to work out without a mask on. “We need to live a normal life now.”

At a southeast Portland pub, George Cummings, 85, took a leap of faith as he joined his friends from a local mountaineering and climbing club for drinks. He knows he’s at a higher risk because of his age



and wears a mask at the grocery store. He said he has not received a second booster shot because his doctor had not told him they were available.

He went maskless as he drank lemonade, ate a cheeseburger and mingled with a group of two dozen in the crowded bar.

“I’m not sure I’m 100 percent comfortable with my decision, but the alternative was not to go to the event,” said Cummings, who lives alone and had suspended his social life for the better part of two years.

“It’s almost a question of, do you want to live – and that includes some sort of social life for a human being – or am I going to hide in my basement?”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Methow Valley land back to Colville Tribes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/methow-valley-land-in-washington-turned-to-colville-tribes/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/methow-valley-land-in-washington-turned-to-colville-tribes/</a>
GIST	<p>More than a century after the United States government took most of their land, the Confederated Tribes of the Colville Reservation in Washington state are getting small chunks of it back.</p> <p>The nonprofit Methow Conservancy handed over the deed to 328 acres of forest, sagebrush, and salmon spawning grounds along the Chewuch River in the Methow Valley to the Colville Tribes on May 19.</p> <p>The deal follows the return of 9,200 acres of ranch land just east of the Methow Valley to the Colville Tribes in October.</p> <p>“It touches our heart that some of our people will be able to spend some time in their homeland on probably the very same place their elders’ footsteps once were,” Andy Joseph Jr., Colville Business Council Chairman, told KUOW.</p> <p>The business council is the governing body of the Confederated Colville Tribes.</p> <p>Long before Methow Valley became a cross-country skiing mecca and Seattle’s vacation playground, it was home to the Methow Tribe.</p> <p>The Methow are one of 12 tribes forced onto the Colville Reservation near the state’s northeast corner, along with the Chelan, Chief Joseph Band of Nez Perce, Colville, Entiat, Lakes, Moses-Columbia, Nespelem, Okanogan, Palus, Sanpoil, and Wenatchi Indians.</p> <p>With a 1.4-million-acre reservation, Washington’s biggest, the Confederated Colville Tribes are one of the state’s biggest landowners.</p> <p>The 12 tribes used to have much more land, with traditional territories stretching from the north Cascades to the Idaho border.</p> <p>Then the U.S. government forced them onto reservations and took much of that land away.</p> <p>An 11-million-acre Moses-Columbia Reservation briefly encompassed all of the Methow Valley. The U.S. government returned the reservation to the public domain in 1883, just four years after establishing it, according to Colville tribal historians.</p> <p>The Colville Reservation today is less than half the size it was when it was created in 1872. An act of Congress in 1892 eliminated what is now called “the north half” from the reservation.</p>

Five years ago, the tribal government approached the Methow Conservancy about acquiring the Wagner Ranch along the Chewuch River. The ranch has a mile and a half of undeveloped riverfront with spawning grounds for Chinook salmon and steelhead.

“The property that we’re getting also was the former Moses-Columbia reservation, and that was taken away from us as well,” Joseph said.

He said his own ancestry includes Methow, Okanagan, and Arrow Lakes on his dad’s side and Palus, Moses-Columbia, Wenatchee, and Entiat on his mom’s side.

“Our people used to be able to spear the salmon that used to be in that area and get enough to live off of the whole year to feed their families,” Joseph said.

Before the Methow Conservancy could act, a Portland-based conservation group, the Western Rivers Conservancy, bought the property. The Portland group’s goal was to sell the land to the Yakama Nation, which is working far upriver from its own territory in south-central Washington to restore spawning habitat for salmon that swim up the Columbia River.

That deal fell through, and the rivers group put the ranch on the market again, giving the Colville Tribes and the Methow Conservancy a second chance to save the ranch from being turned into vacation homes.

“The main thing is it’s bringing back healing,” Joseph said of the newly acquired land. “One of the best feelings that you can receive in your heart, that will stay with us forever, (is) that we got something like this back.”

Joseph said the Colville Tribes intend to manage the area for fish and wildlife, and for traditional practices like gathering edible plants including bitterroot, camas, and serviceberries.

In October, the Seattle nonprofit Conservation Northwest returned another 9,200 acres of sagebrush country northeast of Omak, just east of the Methow Valley, to the Colville Tribes.

According to Conservation Northwest, the former Figlenski family cattle ranch provides habitat for species like grouse and badgers, as well as a key corridor that allows carnivores like lynx and wolverines to migrate between the North Cascades, the Kettle Range of northeastern Washington, and the Rocky Mountains beyond.

“We’re hoping that there’ll be more to follow,” said Joseph, whose Native name, Yə́x̣yə́x̣útxn, means “badger.”

Conservation Northwest executive director Mitch Friedman said in a statement that the Figlenski ranch deal may be the most rewarding and meaningful action he’s been involved in.

“We are making a statement here that injustices can be redressed,” Friedman said.

The Conservation Northwest deal prohibits residential, industrial, or commercial use of the land other than agriculture or minimal commercial recreation.

Methow Conservancy executive director Sarah Brooks said her group donated the Wagner Ranch land to the Colville Tribes outright, with no strings attached.

“It was clear we shared the same vision and values for the landscape. And out of respect for the care they gave that land since time immemorial, we felt it was the right thing to do to give it back with a sense of trust,” Brooks said.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-new-mexico-arizona-fires-santa-fe-03137f42f582b8b47eed373522c92ba8">https://apnews.com/article/wildfires-new-mexico-arizona-fires-santa-fe-03137f42f582b8b47eed373522c92ba8</a>
GIST	<p>Warnings of critical fire conditions blanketed much of the U.S. Southwest on Saturday, as crews in northern New Mexico worked to stop the growth of the nation's largest active wildfire.</p> <p>The 7-week-old fire, the largest in New Mexico history, has burned 491 square miles (1,272 square kilometers) of forest in rugged terrain east of Santa Fe since being started in April by two <a href="#">planned burns</a>.</p> <p>Crews were patrolling partially burned areas and clearing and cutting containment lines, including primary ones near the fire as bulldozers scraped backup lines farther away.</p> <p>The National Weather Service issued red flag warnings of critical fire conditions for parts of Arizona, Colorado, Kansas, Nevada, New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas and Utah. Those conditions are combination of strong wind, low relative humidity and dry vegetation.</p> <p>The return of return of drier and warmer weather with stronger winds posed a threat of increased fire activity over the Memorial Day weekend, prompting officials to urge the public to secure vehicle chains and to be careful with possible fire sources.</p> <p>"The last thing we need right now is another ignition," said Jayson Coil, an operations section chief. Forecasts called for wind gusts up to 50 mph (80 kph), with critical fire conditions continuing into Monday, followed by more favorable weather later in the coming week, said Bruno Rodriguez, the fire management team's meteorologist.</p> <p>The strong winds could fan flames and cause the fire to jump containment lines and race forward, said John Chest, a fire operations manager.</p> <p>"Imagine traveling in your car and the fire can outpace you. That's the kind of extreme fire behavior that we're talking about," Chester said.</p> <p>Nearly 3,000 firefighters and other personnel were assigned to the fire, which was contained around 48% of its perimeter.</p> <p>Initial estimates say the fire has destroyed at least 330 homes but state officials expect the number of homes and other structures that have burned to rise to more than 1,000 as more assessments are done.</p> <p>Elsewhere, 150 firefighters battled a wind-driven fire that burned 9 square miles (24 square kilometers) of grass, brush and salt cedar about 14 miles (22.5 kilometers) southwest of Parker, Arizona. Winds up to 30 mph forced the California blaze to jump the Colorado River into Arizona on Saturday afternoon.</p> <p>The fire forced the evacuation of a recreational vehicle park after starting Thursday and was 44% contained, officials said.</p> <p>The cause of the fire was under investigation.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Russians storm city, shell east Ukraine</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-nato-government-and-politics-ca9849c84e6e0345a84a2cc3ea3d2383">https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-nato-government-and-politics-ca9849c84e6e0345a84a2cc3ea3d2383</a>
GIST	<p>POKROVSK, Ukraine (AP) — Russian and Ukrainian troops engaged in close-quarter combat in an eastern Ukraine city Sunday as Moscow's soldiers, supported by intense shelling, attempted to gain strategic footholds for conquering the region in the face of fierce Ukrainian resistance.</p> <p>Ukrainian regional officials reported Russian forces "storming" Sievierodonetsk after trying unsuccessfully to encircle the city. The fighting knocked out power and cellphone service, and a humanitarian relief center could not operate because of the danger, the mayor said.</p>

Sievierodonetsk, located about 143 kilometers (89 miles) south of the Russian border, emerged in recent days as the epicenter of Moscow's quest to capture all of Ukraine's industrial Donbas region. Russia also stepped up its efforts to take nearby Lysychansk, where civilians rushed to escape persistent shelling.

The two eastern cities span the strategically-important Siverskiy Donetsk river. They are the last major areas under Ukrainian control in Luhansk province, which makes up the Donbas together with neighboring Donetsk.

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy made a rare frontline visit to the city of Kharkiv as he sought to assert the strength of Ukraine's position there. Ukrainian fighters pushed Russian forces back from positions near the city, Ukraine's second-largest, several weeks ago.

"I feel boundless pride in our defenders. Every day, risking their lives, they fight for Ukraine's freedom," Zelenskyy wrote on the Telegram messaging app after visiting soldiers stationed in Kharkiv.

Russia has kept up its bombardment of the northeastern city from afar, and explosions could be heard in the area shortly after Zelenskyy's visit. Shelling and airstrikes have destroyed more than 2,000 apartment buildings since Russia invaded Ukraine on Feb. 24, according to the regional governor, Oleh Syniehubov.

In the wider Kharkiv region, Russian troops still held about 30% of the territory, while Kyiv's troops had recaptured another 5%, the governor said.

However, Zelenskyy acknowledged that the battle for the east is "indescribably difficult." The "Russian army is trying to squeeze at least some result" by concentrating its attacks there, he said in a Saturday night video address.

Russia is focused, after failing to seize Ukraine's capital, on occupying parts of Donbas not already controlled by pro-Moscow separatists.

Russian forces made small advances in recent days as bombardments chewed away at Ukrainian positions and kept civilians trapped in basements or desperately trying to get out safely. Attacks to destroy military targets throughout the country also caused casualties in civilian areas.

Civilians who reached the eastern city of Pokrovsk, about 130 kilometers (80 miles) south of Lysychansk, said they held out as long as they could before fleeing the Russian advance.

Yana Skakova choked back tears as she described leaving with her 18-month and 4-year-old sons while her husband stayed behind to take care of their house and animals. The family was among 18 people who lived in a basement for the past 2 1/2 months until police told them Friday it was time to evacuate.

"None of us wanted to leave our native city," she said. "But for the sake of these small children, we decided to leave."

Serhiy Haidai, the provincial governor of Luhansk, said constant shelling created a "severe" situation in Lysychansk. "There are fatalities and wounded people," he wrote on Telegram, without elaborating.

On Saturday, he said, one civilian died and four were injured after a Russian shell hit a high-rise apartment building.

But some Luhansk supply and evacuation routes still functioned Sunday, he said. He claimed the Russians had retreated "with losses" from around a village near Sievierodonetsk but conducted airstrikes on another nearby village located on the strategic Siverskiy Donetsk river.

Sievierodonetsk Mayor Oleksandr Striuk said there was fighting at the city's bus station on Saturday. Residents remaining in the city, which had a prewar population of around 100,000, risked exposure to shelling to get water from a half-dozen wells, and there was no electricity or cellphone service, Striuk said.

Striuk has estimated that 1,500 civilians have died in Russian attacks since the beginning of the war, as well as from a lack of medicine and diseases that couldn't be treated.

The Institute for the Study of War, a think tank based in Washington, questioned the Kremlin's strategy of assembling a huge military effort to take Sieverodonetsk, saying it was proving costly for Russia and would bring few returns.

"When the Battle of Sieverodonetsk ends, regardless of which side holds the city, the Russian offensive at the operational and strategic levels will likely have culminated, giving Ukraine the chance to restart its operational-level counteroffensives to push Russian forces back," the institute said in an assessment published late Saturday.

The deteriorating conditions raised fears that Sieverodonetsk could become the next Mariupol, a port city 281 kilometers (175 miles) to the south that spent nearly three months under siege before the last Ukrainian fighters surrendered.

An aide to Mariupol's Ukrainian mayor alleged Sunday that after Russia's forces gained complete control of Mariupol, they piled bodies of dead people inside a supermarket.

The aide, Petro Andryushchenko, posted a photo on the Telegram messaging app of what he described as a "corpse dump" in the occupied city. It showed bodies stacked alongside closed supermarket counters.

It was not immediately possible to verify his claim or the authenticity of the photo, which Andryushchenko described as recent.

"Here, the Russians bring the bodies of the dead, which were washed out of their graves during attempts to restore the water supply, and partially exhumed. They just dump them like garbage," he wrote.

Regions across Ukraine were pummeled overnight by renewed Russian airstrikes. On the ground in the eastern Donetsk region, fighters battled back and forth for control of villages and cities.

The Ukrainian army reported heavy fighting around Donetsk, the provincial capital, as well as Lyman to the north. The small city serves as a key rail hub in the Donetsk region. Moscow claimed Saturday to have taken Lyman, but Ukrainian authorities said their fighters remained engaged in combat in parts of the city.

"The enemy is reinforcing its units," the Ukrainian armed forces' General Staff said in an operational update. "It is trying to gain a foothold in the area."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Beijing, Shanghai ease Covid restrictions</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/beijing-shanghai-ease-covid-restrictions-outbreaks-fade-85049236">https://abcnews.go.com/Health/wireStory/beijing-shanghai-ease-covid-restrictions-outbreaks-fade-85049236</a>
GIST	<p>BEIJING -- Shoppers returned to the malls of Beijing on Sunday as the Chinese capital relaxed pandemic restrictions after declaring a small but persistent COVID-19 outbreak effectively under control.</p> <p>A partial reopening of stores and offices in Beijing was welcomed by a weary populace and struggling shopkeepers eager for life to return to normal. Coupled with a gradual easing of restrictions in Shanghai, it signaled that the worst is over in the twin outbreaks in China's most prominent cities.</p> <p>The lockdowns and other restrictions under China's "zero-COVID" strategy have increasingly frustrated residents as they see other countries ease up and re-open their borders. Some have resisted and staged</p>

	<p>protests at apartment complexes and university dormitories, in an authoritarian country where people think twice about speaking out publicly because of possible repercussions.</p> <p>Restaurants remain closed in Beijing, except for takeout and delivery, and many people in Shanghai still can only go out with special passes and for a limited time period, even as the number of new cases has plummeted. Officials tend to err on the side of caution under a system that readily punishes them for lax enforcement if outbreaks flare up or come back.</p> <p>China recorded 293 new cases on Saturday, of which 78 were among people who had arrived from overseas. Shanghai had the most non-imported cases, with 122, and Beijing had 21. That's in a population of more than 20 million people in both cities.</p> <p>Beijing allowed public parks, gyms and cinemas to reopen on Sunday, all at 50% of their capacity. A portion of the Great Wall in a rural part of Beijing, about 60 kilometers (40 miles) from downtown, reopens to visitors on Monday.</p> <p>Xu Hejian, a city spokesperson, said Saturday that sporadic cases are still being found in some districts, but they are within a controllable range. "This round of outbreak has been put under effective control," he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Serbia ignores sanctions; Russia gas deal</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/serbia-ignores-eu-sanctions-secures-gas-deal-putin-85052055">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/serbia-ignores-eu-sanctions-secures-gas-deal-putin-85052055</a>
GIST	<p>BELGRADE, Serbia -- As the war in Ukraine rages, Serbia's president announced that he has secured an "extremely favorable" natural gas deal with Russia during a telephone conversation Sunday with Russian President Vladimir Putin.</p> <p>Serbian President Aleksandar Vucic has refused to explicitly condemn Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and his country has not joined Western sanctions against Moscow. Vucic claims he wants to take Serbia into the European Union but has spent recent years cementing ties with Russia, a long-time ally.</p> <p>The gas deal is likely to be signed during a visit by Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov to Belgrade early in June — a rare visit by a ranking Russian official to a European country since the Russian invasion of Ukraine began Feb. 24.</p> <p>Vucic said he told Putin that he wished "peace would be established as soon as possible."</p> <p>Serbia is almost entirely dependent on Russian gas, and its main energy companies are under Russian majority ownership.</p> <p>"What I can tell you is that we have agreed on the main elements that are very favorable for Serbia," Vucic, a former pro-Russian ultranationalist, told reporters. "We agreed to sign a three-year contract, which is the first element of the contract that suits the Serbian side very well."</p> <p>It is not clear how Serbia would receive the Russian gas if the EU decides to shut off the Russian supply that travels over its member countries. Russia has already cut off gas exports to EU members Finland, Poland and Bulgaria.</p> <p>The EU as a whole has been hurriedly reducing its reliance on Russian energy since the invasion, and is set to discuss ways to further do so and to hear from Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy during a leaders' summit that starts Monday.</p> <p>Despite reports of the atrocities in Ukraine due to the invasion, Vucic and other Serbian leaders have been complaining of Western pressure to join sanctions against Russia. Serbian officials say the Balkan country must resist such pressure, even if it means abandoning the goal of joining the EU.</p>

	<p>Under Vucic's 10-year autocratic rule and relentless pro-Kremlin propaganda, Serbia has gradually slid toward aligning with Russia. Polls suggest a majority in the country would rather join some sort of a union with Moscow than the EU.</p> <p>“The agreement reached by President Vucic with President Putin is proof of how much Serbia’s decision not to participate in anti-Russian hysteria is respected,” Interior Minister Aleksandar Vulin said.</p> <p>“The free leader, free people, make decisions that are good for Serbia and do not accept orders” from the West, said Vulin, who is known for his pro-Russian stance.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Water shortages strain Iraq wheat harvest</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/severe-water-shortages-strain-wheat-harvest-in-ira/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/29/severe-water-shortages-strain-wheat-harvest-in-ira/</a>
GIST	<p>BAGHDAD — Salah Chelab crushed a husk of wheat plucked from his sprawling farmland south of Baghdad and inspected its seeds in the palm of one hand. They were several grams lighter than he hoped.</p> <p>“It’s because of the water shortages,” he said, the farm machine roaring behind him, cutting and gathering his year’s wheat harvest.</p> <p>Chelab had planted most of his 10 acres (4 hectares) of land, but he was only able to irrigate a quarter of it after the Agriculture Ministry introduced strict water quotas during the growing season, he said. The produce he was growing on the rest of it, he fears, “will die without water.”</p> <p>At a time when worldwide prices for wheat have soared due to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, Iraqi farmers say they are paying the price for a government decision to cut irrigation for agricultural areas by 50%.</p> <p>The government took the step in the face of severe water shortages arising from high temperatures and drought - believed to be fueled by climate change - and ongoing water extraction by neighboring countries from the Tigris and Euphrates rivers. All those factors have heavily strained wheat production.</p> <p>Wrestling with the water shortage, Iraq’s government has been unable to tackle other long-neglected issues.</p> <p>Desertification has been blamed as a factor behind this year’s relentless spate of sandstorms. At least 10 have hit the country in the past few months, covering cities with a thick blanket of orange dust, grounding flights and sending thousands to hospitals.</p> <p>“We need water to solve the problem of desertification, but we also need water to secure our food supplies,” said Essa Fayadh, a senior official at the Environment Ministry. “We don’t have enough for both.”</p> <p>Iraq relies on the Tigris and Euphrates rivers for nearly all of its water needs. Both flow into Iraq from Turkey and Iran. Those countries have constructed dams that have either blocked or diverted water, creating major shortages in Iraq.</p> <p>Water Resources Minister Mahdi Rasheed told The Associated Press that river levels were down 60% compared to last year.</p> <p>For Chelab, less water has meant a smaller grain size and lower crop yields.</p> <p>In 2021, Chelab produced 30,000 tons of wheat, the year before that 32,000, receipts from Trade Ministry silos show. This year, he expects no more than 10,000.</p>



His crops are both rain-fed and irrigated via a channel from the Euphrates. Due to low precipitation levels, he has had to rely on the river water during the growing season, he said.

Government officials say change is necessary.

The current system has been inefficient and unsustainable for decades. Water scarcity is leaving them no choice but to push to modernize antiquated and wasteful farming techniques.

“We have a strategic plan to face drought considering the lack of rain, global warming, and the lack of irrigation coming from neighboring countries as we did not get our share of water entitlements,” said Hamid al-Naif, spokesman at the Agriculture Ministry.

The ministry took measures to devise new types of drought-resistant wheat and introduce methods to increase crop yields.

“We are still dealing with irrigation systems of the 1950s. It has nothing to do with the farmers,” he said. “The state must make it efficient, we must force the farmer to accept it.”

Iraqi farmers have historically been heavily dependent on the state in the production of food, a reliance that policymakers and experts said drains government funds.

The Agriculture Ministry supports farmers by providing everything from harvesting tools, seeds, fertilizers and pesticides at a subsidized rate or for free. Water diverted from rivers for irrigation is given at no cost. The Trade Ministry then stores or buys produce from farmers and distributes it to markets.

Wheat is a key strategic crop, accounting for 70% of total cereal production in the country.

Planting starts in October and harvest typically begins in April and extends to June in some areas. Last year, the Agriculture Ministry slashed subsidies for fertilizers, seeds and pesticides, a move that has angered farmers.

Local demand for the staple is between 5-6 million tons a year. But local production is shrinking with each passing year. In 2021, Iraq produced 4.2 million tons of wheat, according to the Agriculture Ministry. In 2020, it was 6.2 million tons.

“Today we might get 2.5 million tons at best,” said al-Naif. That would require Iraq to drive up imports.

Most of the wheat harvest is usually sold to the Trade Ministry. In a sign of the low harvest, so far there are currently only 373,000 tons of wheat available in Trade Ministry storehouses, al-Naif said.

To meet demands amid the recent global crisis in the grain market, the government recently changed a policy to allow all Iraqi farmers to sell their produce to the Trade Ministry silos. Previously, this was limited to farmers who operated within the government plan.

Back in Chelab’s farm, the wheat is ready to be transported to the silo.

“It’s true we need to develop ourselves,” he said. “But the change should be gradual, not immediate.”

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HEADLINE	05/28 Europe leaders press Putin over food crisis
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/28/european-leaders-press-putin-food-crisis-call-dipl/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/28/european-leaders-press-putin-food-crisis-call-dipl/</a>
GIST	European leaders on Saturday pressed Russian President Vladimir Putin to lift his blockade of Ukrainian grain exports as world leaders brace for a looming food crisis.

In a call with French President Emmanuel Macron and German Chancellor Olaf Scholz, Mr. Putin committed to allowing vessels to access Odesa, a key Ukrainian port city on the Black Sea, once the waterways are cleared of mines, according to a French readout of the call.

Ukraine and Russia are among the world's top producers of wheat, corn, and sunflower oil. Russia has mined many of Ukraine's ports, blocking the export of critical food supplies.

Analysts fear the blockade has put the world on the brink of a food security crisis.

According to the Elysee Palace readout of Saturday's call, Mr. Putin told the European leaders that the Kremlin would not impede grain exports from the port, and that "the port would not be used by Russia for military purposes."

Earlier this week, the Kremlin pressed Western leaders to lift sanctions put in place in response to its invasion of Ukraine claiming the West's penalties are blocking the export of millions of tons of grain and other agricultural products.

The Kremlin also has argued that U.S. sanctions have hampered its own ability to export agricultural products.

Secretary of State Antony Blinken has dismissed the Kremlin's talking points, noting that food, fertilizer, and seeds are not subject to U.S. sanctions.

On Thursday, the White House dismissed Russia's calls to lift sanctions and blasted the Kremlin for its attempts to shift blame for the looming food crisis.

"This is Russia's doing," White House press secretary Karine Jean-Pierre said. "Sanctions from the United States and its allies and partners are not preventing the export of Ukrainian or Russian agriculture including food and fertilizer, nor are they preventing the ordinary transactions that are necessary for these transactions."

"This is on them," she said. "Russia should immediately cease its war on Ukraine which is devastating food security and allow the free flow of Ukrainian food."

On Saturday's call, Messrs. Macron and Scholz also called on Mr. Putin to reopen lines of communication with Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy to find a diplomatic solution to put an end to the ongoing war in Ukraine.

They said any solution be "negotiated between Moscow and Kyiv" and must account for "the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Ukraine."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Ukraine war volunteers coming home</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/05/28/americans-fighting-in-ukraine/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national-security/2022/05/28/americans-fighting-in-ukraine/</a>
GIST	<p>To Dakota's surprise, it wasn't the shelling that terrified him most.</p> <p>A Marine Corps veteran who volunteered to fight in Ukraine, he has taken cover behind walls as Russian gunfire punched through and felt the throttle of artillery so many times that his catchphrase, "It's normal," became a joke within the unit.</p> <p>Are you on Telegram? Subscribe to our channel for the latest updates on Russia's war in Ukraine. What wasn't normal, he said, was the feeling of dread while he hid and listened as Russian attack helicopters strafed the position his team of tank hunters had just fled. That moment, he said, "was quite honestly the most unsettled I had been the entire time."</p>

Dakota, who is home in Ohio now after seven weeks of fighting abroad, is among the legion of Western volunteers who have taken up arms against Russia. Like others, he spoke on the condition that his full name not be disclosed, citing concerns for his safety and that of family and friends.

In interviews with The Washington Post, foreign fighters from the United States and elsewhere described glaring disparities between what they expected the war to be like and what they experienced. They recalled going into battle underequipped and outgunned, the occasional thrill of blowing up Russian vehicles, and feeling torn over whether to go back to Ukraine. Some intend to do so. Others saw friends die and decided enough is enough.

For several, an inflection point came in late April when 22-year-old Willy Joseph Cancel, another Marine Corps veteran, was killed in combat northwest of Mykolaiv, a region that has seen ferocious violence as Russian commanders have sought to widen territorial gains. The full circumstances surrounding Cancel's death remain a mystery, and his body has not been recovered. Attempts to speak with Cancel's family were unsuccessful.

There are no known U.S. military personnel in Ukraine, and the Biden administration has sought to discourage American citizens from independently joining the fight, though it is not against the law to do so. Officials have said that the battlefield is complex and dangerous, and that Americans wishing to help the Ukrainian cause should look to do so by other means. And while the exact number of Americans volunteering is unknown, an estimated 4,000 expressed interest after the invasion in late February. Many entered the fight after Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky personally appealed to foreign volunteers to journey there and fight.

Military veterans, in particular, have been drawn to the war, emboldened by their combat training and an eagerness to apply their skills in a conflict that, for many, feels like a struggle of good versus evil.

But the conflict also has drawn Western military veterans who either have never deployed into combat previously or have experienced only asymmetrical insurgencies — not this type of war, with contested airspace, unrelenting rocket bombardment, and swarms of drones with sophisticated thermal targeting technology.

Dane Miller, a U.S. Army veteran, went to Poland to take on a quieter but significant role — helping to run logistics for refugee aid centers and sending crucial supplies over the border into Ukraine. He has also assisted volunteer networks in reviewing prospective foreign fighters' military records, to assess whether they "have the chops ... to take on a massive military," he said. While many do, a common theme is that swagger sometimes stands in place of relevant experience, he noted. He has advised some veterans against going into Ukraine.

"There's this idea of heroism and it's glorified. I will look at your 214 and tell you if you're ready for this," he said, referring to the U.S. military's discharge paperwork, DD Form 214, that lists the training and certifications completed while in uniform.

In the Marines, Dakota spent four years as an antitank missile gunner, according to his service record provided by the Marine Corps. He never saw combat but did spend time in Afghanistan as a contractor, he said.

He put his first semester of college on hold so he could fight the Russians, saying a "righteous indignation" compelled him to go for it. He arrived in Ukraine within days of the invasion. Commanders were eager, he said, to tap his knowledge of U.S.-manufactured Javelin anti-armor weapons, thousands of which have been transferred to the Ukrainian army.

Dakota's cohort of foreign volunteers was attached to a Ukrainian military unit and brought by yellow school bus to Kyiv, from which they were sent northwest into an embattled town outside the capital. It

was early March. They were issued antitank weapons and Javelin missiles but no batteries for the launch unit, he said. Without a power source, the equipment was inoperable.

Homes were on fire, Dakota recalled. His unit gathered for a patrol through the woods. A commander motioned with his hand: “Everything that way is Russian.” Artillery blanketed the area. The Ukrainians and their volunteers dispersed. Some went into trench lines, other went into homes. One abandoned residence still had a Christmas tree set up, he recalled. Some Russian troops fell back as the fighting intensified, and they left behind a wounded comrade who wailed into the night, Dakota said.

By the end of the second night, eight of the 20 volunteers in Dakota’s unit had abandoned their posts, he said, including a fellow Marine veteran who appeared to break his machine gun with a rock in the hope of passing it off as battle damage. Another feigned an injury, he said.

Dakota fought throughout the Kyiv region and later was dispatched to the south to help train others on using the Javelin. On one mission, he said, he was unable get a lock on a Russian tank with a cold thermal signature. Then, four men climbed onto the hull to sit and smoke. The sight locked on their body heat. His missile pulverized the vehicle, a strike captured on video.

Russian artillery pounded their position a half-hour later, and Dakota’s team withdrew under the cover of night. About a week later he felt nauseated and carsick. He was diagnosed with a brain injury linked to his proximity to the shelling, he said, and left for home toward the end of April. He has been in recovery ever since.

“It’s not over. It’s not done. It’s not finished,” he said.

Other volunteers described different frustrations. Pascal, a veteran of the German army, was on a team with Cancel, the American killed in combat in late April. Problems arose during their first mission, he said.

The team suspected their two-way radios were being monitored by Russian forces, and they lacked extra batteries, forcing them to rely on unsecured cellphones and WhatsApp to communicate. Soon after they exchanged plans, their position was attacked by Russian artillery, he said.

The volunteers felt underinformed during many of their missions, not knowing where they were — and, vitally, where the Russians were, Pascal said. The day Cancel was killed, he said, they took fire from a position they believed to be Ukrainian but didn’t have radio communication to confirm. Two members of the team ventured out to investigate. Gunfire sounded, and they never returned, he said.

The remaining team members came under heavy Russian fire, including artillery rounds, from the same direction, Pascal said. One team member was killed in the shelling. Pascal and another volunteer turned their attention to Cancel, who had been struck by shrapnel, he said. They applied tourniquets in a fruitless attempt to stop the bleeding. Their bodies were left behind as Pascal and another survivor withdrew.

That was Pascal’s last mission. He later crossed into Poland. Miller, the American volunteer, met him at a bar in Warsaw and noted how shaken up he seemed. They stepped outside and Miller consoled him, using Google Translate to find the right words in German. They hugged.

“From the beginning, we had no chance,” Pascal said in an interview. “I was asking myself why I survived and the others did not.”

A Ukrainian-born man who is a naturalized U.S. citizen spoke with The Post on the condition he be identified only by his radio call sign: Texas. He recalled how, early in the war, he saw images of his hometown on fire and left to join the fight two days later.

Texas, who earlier this month returned to his home in Houston, never served in the military. He works in an office. But he's a quick study, he said, and soon was imparting lessons learned from his American colleagues to the Ukrainians whom he fought alongside — things like tactical theories for conducting ambushes, and staying out of sight from Russia's surveillance drones and vehicle-mounted optics.

Texas patrolled in hunter-killer teams in southern Ukraine, he said, including one mission where he spotted a T-72 tank dug into a berm near Mykolaiv, its turret barely visible from more than two kilometers away. Texas fired a missile and it sliced through the tank just next to the turret. A success — but the rest of the team let out a groan. They wanted to see a column of fire propel the tank's turret high into the air.

"It didn't explode the way we wish it would," said Texas, whose lessons were documented in an April report by the Wall Street Journal. "We were kind of bummed about that."

Life at home lacks the sense of purpose and excitement, Texas said. He's mired in divorce proceedings, initiated before he left for Ukraine, and occasionally hears from friends who update him over text about their successful tank harvests.

In quiet moments, he reflects on what he has taken from the experience, good and bad. He's more relaxed at work and doesn't stress about small inconveniences the way he used to. But something is missing, he said, and he is tempted every day to get it back.

"Once you see that life-and-death contrast, and you come back to a peaceful life and a peaceful job," he said, "everything seems to be less meaningful by comparison."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Burger, steak prices to remain high</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/burger-prices-to-remain-high-as-cattle-ranchers-shrink-herds-11653737581?mod=hp_lista_pos4">https://www.wsj.com/articles/burger-prices-to-remain-high-as-cattle-ranchers-shrink-herds-11653737581?mod=hp_lista_pos4</a>
GIST	<p>Burgers and steaks are set to stay pricey as U.S. cattle ranchers shrink their herds, further constraining U.S. beef production in the months ahead.</p> <p>Rising costs for feed and other expenses are leading ranchers to sell their calves into feedlots at a faster pace, according to federal data, leaving fewer cattle available for slaughter later this year and in 2023. Persistent drought conditions in the Western U.S. have parched grazing pastures, requiring cattlemen to spend more on supplemental feed, ranchers and beef industry officials said.</p> <p>Beef production in 2023 is expected to decline 7% and cattle prices are expected to increase to record highs, the U.S. Department of Agriculture said this month. Those higher prices will cut into profits for meatpackers like Tyson Foods Inc., JBS USA Holdings Inc., Cargill Inc. and National Beef Packing Co., industry executives said, and likely add to consumers' already rising shopping bills.</p> <p>Jeanie Alderson, a fourth-generation rancher in Birney, Mont., said she sold about 75 aging mother cows from her herd of about 250 in recent months. In a normal season, she would buy new ones in the spring, but it has been too expensive to take on any more this year, she said. Wildfires in the southeast portion of the state are burning up pastures where cattle typically feed, and some of her Montana neighbors have had to spend more on pricey livestock feed, squeezing their budgets and prompting them to reduce the size of their herds.</p> <p>"It's really stressful," Ms. Alderson said. "A lot of ranchers are in deep, deep debt, and if they have to go more in debt, some people will go out of business in the next few years."</p> <p>Drought conditions and higher operating costs for ranchers encouraged the rapid culling of beef cows in the first quarter of 2022, according to the USDA. Cattle producers have lost money five of the past eight months, according to estimates from Iowa State University.</p>

Beef prices for consumers in April were up about 14% from a year earlier, according to the USDA. Rising food prices are starting to change some [consumers' shopping habits](#), industry executives have said, leading some to switch to [less-expensive meat](#), cooking oil and frozen food.

Red meat prices aren't coming down anytime soon for consumers as cattle availability tightens throughout this year, though prices could see some relief over the summer as meatpackers bolster staffing at their plants and increase production, said Brian Earnest, an animal-protein economist at [CoBank](#).

The combination of shrinking U.S. cattle herds and consumers looking for cheaper meat options threatens the lofty profits beef processors have enjoyed over the past two years.

Since the pandemic, meatpacking companies including Tyson, JBS and National Beef have boasted surging profit margins from their beef businesses. Those profits have drawn criticism from Washington lawmakers and from the Biden administration, which has accused major meat companies of using their market power to increase prices for restaurants and supermarkets while underpaying farmers.

Meatpacker officials have said that because many of their plants remain short-staffed, they can't process as many cattle. That has left more livestock on the market, they said, leading to lower cattle prices as well as constrained supplies of beef products. Meanwhile, demand from grocery stores and restaurants hasn't let up, executives have said, boosting wholesale meat prices over the past year.

Ranchers' moves to shrink their herds are changing that dynamic, company officials and industry analysts said.

Tim Klein, chief executive of National Beef, said on an April earnings call for Brazilian-owner [Marfrig Global Foods](#) SA that he expects the U.S. cattle supply to decline in the third and fourth quarters of this year. Shrinking herds mean cattle will be more expensive for processors to purchase, analysts and meat executives said.

Live-cattle costs increased by about \$545 million in Tyson's quarter that ended April 2, the company said. As of February, 54% of cattle inventory was in areas experiencing drought conditions, meaning herds in those places are likely to shrink further through the remainder of the fiscal year, Tyson finance chief Stewart Glendinning said on a call with analysts this month.

"We've had some really extraordinary margins over the last couple of years. We don't think that will maintain that level," Donnie King, Tyson's CEO, told analysts on the call.

Arkansas-based Tyson also said it expects more customers to shift to its chicken or prepared and packaged foods products, such as Jimmy Dean sausage. The company said it hopes its wide swath of products will distance itself from the traditional meat business's boom-and-bust cycles. Exports to countries such as China are still strong and likely to help keep meatpackers' beef profit margins steady, analysts said.

Ranchers, however, said they have been dealing with chronically low profits for years, as the sums they receive for their cattle lag behind rising retail beef prices. Now, rising livestock feed prices and higher farmland costs are squeezing ranchers further, prompting some to reduce their herds, said Geoffery Stolle, vice president of marketing for the Nebraska Cattlemen.

"Do I want to invest this much in this animal to keep her around, or do I trim my numbers back at this point?" Mr. Stolle said, referring to rising feed costs. "We're in a rather aggressive liquidation phase at this point."

Price increases are starting to affect consumer demand, with some consumers [trading down to cheaper options](#) in supermarket meat cases. Higher food costs are causing shoppers at [Walmart](#) Inc. to shift to

	<p>lower-cost private label brands for several meat and dairy products, John Furner, head of Walmart U.S., said on a call with analysts earlier this month.</p> <p>While shopping at a Westside Market grocery store in New York City, Sal Traina said he has noticed higher food prices in recent weeks and is buying more pork and chicken, which tend to cost less.</p> <p>“I think it goes with the territory because of inflation,” he said, adding that he still buys red meat from time to time.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Bottleneck fuels record high gas prices</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/bottleneck-fuels-record-high-gas-prices-11653750180?mod=hp_lead_pos6">https://www.wsj.com/articles/bottleneck-fuels-record-high-gas-prices-11653750180?mod=hp_lead_pos6</a>
GIST	<p>A shortage of fuel-making facilities is pushing U.S. gasoline and diesel prices to record levels, just as drivers prepare for the summer driving season.</p> <p>Gasoline prices topped \$4 a gallon in all 50 U.S. states in recent days for the first time ever, even though global crude oil prices have pulled back from highs reached during the early days of <a href="#">Russia’s invasion of Ukraine</a>. U.S. oil prices are hovering around \$115 a barrel, down from more than \$120 a barrel in March.</p> <p>Higher crude oil prices are contributing to the cost of gasoline, but the primary culprit behind the pain at the pump is a lack of global refining capacity, say energy executives and analysts.</p> <p>Demand for gasoline and diesel has all but recovered from pandemic lows in the U.S., despite increasing Covid-19 cases around the country. The problem is that there are now fewer refineries, which convert oil into fuels and other products, than before the pandemic began.</p> <p>The refining bottlenecks are prompting fears about global shortages of gasoline and diesel. The world hasn’t invested enough in maintaining or adding refineries, leading to huge gaps between the price of oil and gasoline, according to Saudi Arabia’s energy minister, Prince Abdulaziz bin Salman.</p> <p>“All mobility fuels have skyrocketed...and the gap between crude prices and these products in some cases is actually 60%,” he said at a conference in Riyadh in May.</p> <p>Executives and analysts say the situation could worsen because there are no plans to add significant refining capacity, and fuel demand will grow throughout the summer as drivers hit the road and more economies loosen Covid-19 restrictions.</p> <p>Here is a look at what’s pushing U.S. gasoline prices to record highs.</p> <p><b>How much are Americans driving?</b></p> <p>Fossil fuel consumption plummeted in 2020 as global lockdowns reduced economic activity and kept drivers off the road, a pullback that extended well into 2021. But despite the persistence of the Covid-19 virus, global demand for oil and gas has essentially recovered to prepandemic levels, according to the Paris-based International Energy Agency.</p> <p>In the U.S., gasoline demand peaked in 2018 at an annual average of about 9.33 million barrels a day, and fell during the pandemic to about 8 million barrels a day, according to the U.S. Energy Information Administration. The EIA expects that to increase to around 8.9 million barrels a day, on average, this year and next.</p> <p>Despite the high gasoline prices, AAA forecasts that 39.2 million people will travel 50 miles or more from home over Memorial Day weekend, up 8.3% from 2021 levels.</p> <p>Demand for diesel, the primary fuel for the trucking industry and other industrial users, has also soared as economic activity has picked up.</p>



“Few could have predicted the speed with which the U.S. economy recovered from the initial shutdown,” said Jonathan Wolff, an associate professor of Economics at Miami University of Ohio. “A growing economy means a growing demand for energy.”

### **How many refineries are operational?**

As fuel demand crashed during the pandemic, refiners around the world permanently closed older and less profitable plants. Around 3 million barrels a day of global refining capacity closed during the pandemic and 1 million barrels a day of that was in the U.S., according to [JPMorgan Chase](#).

The closures were exacerbated by a punishing hurricane season in the Gulf of Mexico, home to the world’s largest petrochemical complex, that damaged some refineries there. Some companies are performing maintenance on their refineries right now, keeping even more capacity offline. The utilization rate for U.S. refineries is at about 90%, according to the EIA, at the top of the five-year range.

All of that is pushing profit margins for refining companies to record levels. The margins for producing gasoline in the East Coast are approaching \$50 a barrel, up from less than \$10 a barrel in the spring of 2020, according to consultant RBN Energy LLC. The margins for producing diesel in the East Coast spiked to more than \$100 a barrel in late April but are now around \$60 a barrel, RBN said.

“Refinery capacity rationalizations that have taken place in the last couple of years continue to contribute to the supply tightness,” [Valero](#) CEO Joseph Gorder said on a call with analysts in April. Valero, the second largest U.S. refiner, reported its best margins since 2015 in the first quarter.

### **Why are refineries closing if they are so profitable right now?**

Increased demand typically leads to more investment in supply, but refiners aren’t rushing to add capacity. That’s because before the pandemic, fuel demand was plateauing in the U.S. and other parts of the world as many countries began to transition to cleaner sources of energy.

When the pandemic took hold, companies took the opportunity to shut down older plants in the world’s richest countries, including the U.S., Australia and Europe. Despite a resurgence in fuel demand, refining companies’ views on demand’s long-term trajectory haven’t changed. A refinery can take 20 years to recoup the initial investment, making the current business case for a new plant dim.

When Hurricane Ida damaged [Phillips 66](#)’s Alliance refinery in Louisiana, it permanently shut the plant instead of investing more than \$1 billion in repairs. By the end of 2023, as much as an additional 1.69 million barrels of U.S. refining capacity is expected to close, according to consulting firm Turner, Mason & Co.

Some companies are converting refineries into plants that can produce biofuels and other greener products. Phillips 66 said in May that it will spend \$850 million to convert its San Francisco Refinery in Rodeo, Calif., into a renewable fuels facility.

### **How is Russia’s invasion of Ukraine contributing to the situation?**

The war in Ukraine is exacerbating a fuel market that has little to no cushion. Western sanctions have forced Russian refiners to shut down 800,000 barrels a day of capacity and potentially as much as 1.4 million barrels a day in May as product flows to Europe have stopped, according to JPMorgan Chase.

That has left European consumers to look to the U.S., Asia and the Middle East for replacements, further drawing on already tight supplies. Refiners on the East Coast have ramped up fuel exports to Europe, depleting domestic stockpiles, especially of diesel.

Earlier this month, U.S. diesel fuel inventories fell to their lowest levels in 17 years, according to JPMorgan Chase, drawing at a time of year when stocks are normally flat or building. On the East Coast, storage levels of diesel fell in May to their lowest level in the 40-year history of EIA measurements, the bank said.

Overall, U.S. inventories of gasoline are 18.8 million barrels, or 8%, below the average for this time of year, according to the EIA.

### **Is relief at the pump coming anytime soon?**

Many energy analysts and executives believe high fuel prices will persist for the rest of the year and may even get worse.

The end of spring maintenance season for fuel makers could add an additional 2.5 million barrels of capacity as plants come back online, according to JPMorgan Chase, potentially preventing further draws on stockpiles. But Covid-19 lockdowns in China are keeping a lid on global fuel demand, and if those lift, there will be even more competition for tight fuel supplies.

Meanwhile, more Russian refineries may close as the war continues, and the European Union's proposed ban on Russian oil would likely cause gasoline prices to increase further, say analysts. This year's Atlantic hurricane season is forecast to be more active than usual, and if a significant amount of refining capacity were forced offline, similar to past seasons, the U.S. could actually run out of certain fuels, JPMorgan Chase said.

"Should China emerge from its Covid constraints, demand could come back ferociously and into a market that is already tight," said Peter McNally, an analyst at Third Bridge. "U.S. refinery utilization is approaching its limits and any disruption would make the U.S. more dependent on fuel imports, potentially leading to higher prices."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Studying Russia weapons at 'petting zoo'</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-war-rages-in-ukraine-the-u-s-military-studies-russian-weapons-at-a-petting-zoo-outside-las-vegas-11653742803">https://www.wsj.com/articles/as-war-rages-in-ukraine-the-u-s-military-studies-russian-weapons-at-a-petting-zoo-outside-las-vegas-11653742803</a>
GIST	<p>NELLIS AIR FORCE BASE, Nevada—A 20-minute drive from the Las Vegas Strip is a repository for some of the most coveted secrets of the Cold War, accumulated over the years from forgotten battles, arms dealers and foreign governments hungry for hard cash.</p> <p>The Threat Training Facility on Nellis Air Force Base houses the collection of Soviet weapons, many lying idle in the desert heat. It offers visitors a close-up look at the MiG-29 jet fighter, once one of the Soviet Union's most feared aircraft because of its air-to-air combat capabilities. Visitors can also crawl into an SA-13, a mobile Soviet surface-to-air missile system that menaced Western aircraft in the first Gulf War. And then there's the Mi-24 Hind, an attack helicopter the Soviets used extensively in their war in Afghanistan, where it became a target of CIA-supplied <a href="#">Stinger missiles</a>.</p> <p>In Pentagon parlance, these prized samples from the Soviet arsenal allow for "foreign material exploitation," or studying another country's weapons. The collection has earned a more cuddly moniker from curious visitors: "the petting zoo."</p> <p>Now, this quasi-graveyard of aging weaponry is getting another moment in the sun as a result of <a href="#">Russia's invasion of Ukraine</a>. While most of the petting zoo's weaponry is decades old, the war in Ukraine, in which both sides are often using aging Soviet arms, serves as a reminder for why the collection exists in the first place.</p> <p>The exact origins of some of the equipment is still shrouded in Cold War mystery of spies, gun runners and defectors. Some of the pieces were captured in war, like the Mi-24 Hind. U.S. forces scooped up the Russian-built attack helicopter from the defeated Iraqi military in the first Gulf War.</p> <p>"We don't like to say war trophy," said Lt. Col Brian Redstone, the commander of the Air Force's 547th Intelligence Squadron, which operates the facility. He preferred to call it an "acquisition to help educate and train our war fighters."</p>

Lt. Col. Redstone, who was in second grade when the Soviet Union collapsed in 1991, said the military needs to make sure it doesn't forget what it learned fighting against Russian weapons in the past, particularly when some of the same arms are being used in [the Ukraine conflict](#).

"This allows us to make sure that we don't do that," he said.

The reasons for collecting the equipment go back to the Vietnam War, when U.S. jet fighters suffered mounting losses against Soviet-built aircraft. To help better understand those losses, the U.S. secretly acquired Soviet aircraft and then flew them in Nevada as part of a classified test squadron known as the Red Eagles.

After the Soviet Union collapsed and the Red Eagles were disbanded, the Air Force decided to lift the veil of secrecy over at least some of its foreign weaponry. In 1993, the Air Force declassified the Threat Training Facility, and opened it to the public in 1996.

"We spent quite an amount of time training and working on that equipment, so we didn't want to just throw it in a junkyard," Lt. Col. Redstone said.

Since the 1990s, the intelligence squadron has used the equipment to help develop tactics and procedures for members of the U.S. military who may end up fighting in wars against the weapons. The exhibits at the facility allow visitors to experience the look and feel of real Soviet weapons, which is how it became dubbed the "petting zoo."

"I don't like that term, quite honestly," Lt. Col. Redstone said. "It reinforces the narrative that it's a museum, that there's no training value. But there absolutely is training value to me."

The advantage of having the physical weapons available is the ability to demonstrate some of the problems an enemy might face on the battlefield, said Maj. James Livsey, the squadron's director of operations.

He pointed to the cramped interior of an SA-13. "It is hot. It is tight. It is bumpy," Maj. Livsey said. "It's not an overall pleasant experience, but it's good to realize the human factors that go into this."

Another lesson that can be gleaned from the petting zoo is why so many countries, including Ukraine, still use these weapons. While some governments have opted for the equipment because of historical ties to the Soviet Union, the weapons can be easier to use and maintain than those produced by the U.S.

The war has spurred Ukraine—which was part of the Soviet Union until its dissolution—and [Western allies to acquire](#) even more Soviet weaponry for Kyiv's military, such as aircraft and air defense systems.

A former American military official who had worked for several decades with Russian weapons said he was approached in March about trying to recondition some of the 547th Intelligence Squadron's Soviet aircraft for potential use in Ukraine.

The former military official said he was asked if he could "make the petting zoo's aircraft flyable?" He said he couldn't.

"There's fuselage damage to the ones that I am familiar with that make them unserviceable," he said.

That wouldn't be the only example of the U.S. military trying to resurrect its inventory of Soviet weapons. The U.S. military and intelligence community still own some Russian weapons that remain classified, according to those familiar with the foreign material exploitation program.

The Pentagon was planning to send some of its [Soviet air defense systems to Ukraine](#), including an SA-8, The Wall Street Journal has reported. The Pentagon hasn't publicly disclosed what was sent, but a defense

	<p>official said: “Parts of Soviet-era missile defense systems stored by the U.S. in Alabama have been delivered to Ukraine.”</p> <p>The Air Force’s 547th Intelligence Squadron has an SA-8 at the petting zoo, but isn’t sending it, or any of its other weapons, to Ukraine. By all accounts, the equipment there is in poor shape. The aircraft can’t fly; the tanks can’t fire; and only two pieces in the collection can move on their own.</p> <p>One former defense contractor, who previously worked with the U.S. military’s collection of foreign equipment, was skeptical that any of the U.S.-owned Soviet air defense systems could make it to the battlefield. “We have systems that can limp along,” he said. “They may or may not make it to the transporter, and they may or may not work for more than a couple hours.”</p> <p>Even if the equipment is old, the petting zoo still provides a critical service for the military, the former American military official said. The collection allows American troops to see what Russian equipment looks like in real life before they potentially encounter it on the battlefield.</p> <p>Modern aircraft may have radar systems that can look down and identify a potential target, but it is still important, the former official said, for members of the military to recognize by sight a foreign aircraft.</p> <p>“Sometimes your look-down, shoot-down equipment is not quite as accurate as a set of eyeballs,” he said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Unemployment record lows in 17 states</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.wsj.com/articles/17-states-where-unemployment-is-at-record-lows-11653816600?mod=hp_lead_pos3">https://www.wsj.com/articles/17-states-where-unemployment-is-at-record-lows-11653816600?mod=hp_lead_pos3</a>
GIST	<p>The unemployment rate in 17 states concentrated in the Midwest, South and Mountain West reached a record low in April, a sign of <a href="#">an unusually tight labor market</a>.</p> <p>The milestone in those states marks a sharp reversal from the spring of 2020, when the Covid-19 pandemic <a href="#">drove unemployment to record highs</a> in 15 of those states, according to Labor Department data tracing back to 1976.</p> <p>Two additional states—Oklahoma and Arkansas—hit record low unemployment rates earlier this year.</p> <p>In Nebraska, where jobs in <a href="#">pandemic-resilient industries</a> such as agriculture and food-processing abound, the jobless rate clocked in at 1.9% in April. The state tied Utah for having the lowest unemployment rate in the nation. Other Midwest and Mountain West areas reached record low jobless rates, as did Southern states such as Alabama, Georgia and Tennessee.</p> <p>Unemployment has fallen across the U.S. after the national unemployment rate skyrocketed to 14.7% in April 2020, the highest for data going back to 1948. Businesses <a href="#">temporarily closed their doors</a> and Americans stayed at home when Covid-19 hit, but reopenings that summer spurred a rapid jobs recovery.</p> <p>In many states that are more rural and less densely populated, different factors have driven unemployment to record lows since the onset of Covid-19. Those factors include looser restrictions and industry-job mixes more resilient to the pandemic, economists say.</p> <p>Low joblessness suggests the labor market, a pillar of the economy, is still running strong, <a href="#">despite volatility in stocks, bonds</a> and other assets reflecting investor fears that the U.S. is headed toward an economic downturn. Employers continue <a href="#">to cling to their employees</a>, and many workers who want a job can easily find one.</p> <p>Low unemployment is also symptomatic of an unbalanced economy in which there are <a href="#">too few job seekers</a> to keep pace with a <a href="#">surge in consumer spending</a> and employer demand for workers.</p>

“Any time you have trillions of extra dollars sloshing around in the economy chasing more goods and services that are being produced by fewer people, you’re going to have this very, very tight labor market,” said Julia Pollak, chief economist at jobs site [ZipRecruiter](#).

Mismatches between job openings and available workers are particularly acute in some states, creating more-extreme ratios than the national average of [two openings for every out-of-work job seeker](#). In Nebraska, there were about 3.5 job openings for every unemployed person seeking work in March.

Employers across the nation [are ramping up wages](#) to attract workers in a tight labor market. In April, [average hourly earnings rose 5.5%](#) from a year earlier, well above the roughly 3% increase at the end of 2019, before the pandemic hit.

Workers who reap wage increases are able to save, or spend money on airplane tickets, meals out and hotels. But employers who have to pay workers more might pass along price increases to stay profitable, threatening to keep inflation elevated when it is already [near a four-decade high](#).

States including Arizona and Georgia have record-low jobless rates and solid wage growth. But major cities in those states [are also confronting inflation](#) that exceeds the national rate of 8.3%. The Phoenix and Atlanta metropolitan areas saw consumer prices rise by 11% and 10.8%, respectively, in April compared with a year ago.

The Federal Reserve [is increasing interest rates](#) to help tame inflation. That will likely be particularly beneficial to states with very low unemployment rates that would otherwise “have a harder time getting inflation under control” than less-tight labor markets, said Daniel Zhao, senior economist at Glassdoor.

Labor-force participation rates—which represent the share of the population working or seeking a job—tend to be higher in states with record low unemployment rates. For instance, Nebraska, with a 1.9% unemployment rate, saw the highest labor-force participation of any state in April. Other states—including Utah, South Dakota and Minnesota—also had low joblessness accompanied by relatively high labor-force participation.

Some of the factors that have triggered low jobless rates in states are specific to the pandemic. For instance, looser government restrictions on businesses helped keep unemployment rates in many states lower throughout the pandemic, economists say. That [included many states in the South](#). Others that restricted activity for longer periods—including Northeastern states such as New York, Massachusetts and Connecticut—still have more ground to recover before reaching prepandemic rates of unemployment. Places with a higher concentration of goods-producing jobs in manufacturing and warehousing have been better able to endure the pandemic’s effects, Ms. Pollak said, pointing to Elkhart, Ind., [an RV manufacturing center](#), as an example.

In contrast, states with a large presence of customer-facing jobs at restaurants, bars and hotels cut jobs at a rapid rate amid pandemic shutdowns and consumer pullback in early 2020. More than two years after Covid-19 struck, job-market recoveries in those states are still lagging behind others, though they are making progress as the pandemic’s grip eases.

For example, unemployment rates in Hawaii and Nevada surged to respective highs of 22.4% and 28.5% in April 2020, as the tourism-heavy states [suffered from the lack of visitors](#). By April of this year, their unemployment rates were still above the national rate of 3.6% but had declined to 4.2% and 5%.

“When you disrupt employment that much, it can take a long time for it to recover,” Ms. Pollak said. “The tourist numbers will return faster than the businesses that employ the service workers.”

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/ukraine-pleads-for-weapons-as-russian-onslaught-threatens-to-turn-the-tide">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/ukraine-pleads-for-weapons-as-russian-onslaught-threatens-to-turn-the-tide</a>
GIST	<p>Ukraine is in a race against time to save the eastern Donbas region as relentless Russian artillery and air strikes threaten to turn the tide of the war, and support for Kyiv's continued defiance among some west European allies appears to be slipping.</p> <p>Ukrainian officials say they urgently need advanced US-made mobile multiple launch rocket systems (MLRS) to halt Russian advances in Luhansk and Donetsk. The rockets would be capable of striking Russian firing positions, military bases, air strips and supply lines at a range of up to 300km (185 miles).</p> <p>"We are in great need of weapons that will make it possible to engage the enemy over a long distance," Ukraine's commander-in-chief, General Valeriy Zaluzhnyi, said. "The price of delay is measured by the lives of people who have protected the world from [Russian] fascism."</p> <p>Ongoing disagreements in Washington have held up MLRS deliveries. Some of President Joe Biden's national security advisers are said to be fearful Ukraine may use the rockets to hit targets inside Russia, a development that could spark an escalation drawing in the US and Nato. Kyiv has previously launched attacks on Russian soil.</p> <p>Moscow, keenly aware of the game-changing potential of the rocket systems, has already voiced strong objections. "If the Americans do this, they will clearly cross a red line," said Olga Skabeeva, an influential Russian state TV host whose views reflect the Kremlin's. Russia's response could be "very harsh", she warned.</p> <p>US news outlets reported on Saturday that Biden had agreed to provide some rocket systems as part of a major new US arms package for Ukraine to be announced this week. The package may also include another advanced weapon, the high mobility artillery rocket system, known as HIMARS.</p> <p>The decision reportedly followed talks between the US secretary of state, Antony Blinken, and Dmytro Kuleba, Ukraine's foreign minister. "Heavy weapons on top of our agenda, and more are coming our way," Kuleba said after the talks.</p> <p>But doubts remain about which weapons systems will be provided, and the timing of the US move. The White House and the Pentagon have yet to confirm the reports.</p> <p>"I won't get ahead of decisions that haven't been made yet," the Pentagon spokesman, John Kirby, said. Despite the delay, he insisted it was "not too late" to send new weapons to Ukraine.</p> <p>If the US defies Russia's warnings and goes ahead this week, the UK is expected to simultaneously announce it will also supply advanced long-range rocket systems. The British version of the MLRS, which can fire 12 missiles in less than a minute, has a more limited range of 84kms (52 miles). Earlier this month, Britain announced an additional £1.3bn in military support.</p> <p>Speaking in Prague on Friday, the foreign secretary, Liz Truss, said it was "completely legitimate" for Nato and EU countries to provide more weapons, including tanks and planes, to Ukraine despite Russia's objections. Like Boris Johnson, Truss says Russia's leader, Vladimir Putin, must be seen to lose the war. Britain has demanded a return to Ukraine's pre-2014 borders.</p> <p>The UK's uncompromising stance is not shared by leading European countries shaken by Russia's advances, whose focus is increasingly on notional peace negotiations. Henry Kissinger, the veteran American diplomat, fuelled this debate last week in Davos by suggesting Kyiv should prepare to make concessions, amounting to a possible de facto partition.</p> <p>Emmanuel Macron and Olaf Scholz held an 80-minute phone conversation with Putin, during which they urged the Russian president to hold "direct serious negotiations" with Volodymyr Zelenskyy. The French president and German chancellor called for an "immediate ceasefire and a withdrawal of Russian troops".</p>



Keir Giles, of London-based thinktank Chatham House, said a quick end to the conflict appeared to be the priority for France and Germany.

“There are already worrying indications that the flakiest of the western European partners may be discussing between themselves how to force a surrender on Ukraine in the form of territorial concessions in order to end the fighting ... It is more important to them [France and Germany] to end the fighting than to arrive at a workable outcome,” Giles said.

This apparent shift has angered east European governments such as Poland, whose president accused Germany of failing to keep a promise to provide heavy weapons. After Italy last week put forward a peace plan, which was dismissed by the Kremlin as “fantasy”, Edgars Rinkēvičs, Latvia’s foreign minister, warned that, in any case, Putin could not be trusted to stick to any settlement.

“Any agreement with Russia isn’t worth a broken penny,” the Ukrainian presidential adviser and peace talks negotiator, Mykhailo Podolyak, said. “Is it possible to negotiate with a country that always lies cynically? ... Russia has proved that it is a barbarian country that threatens world security. A barbarian can only be stopped by force.”

Pressure to talk peace or make concessions is feeding Ukraine’s concerns that it is in a race against time to turn around its battlefield fortunes. The Kyiv government said on Saturday that its forces may have to retreat from Luhansk to avoid encirclement.

Russia’s defence ministry said the eastern Ukrainian town of Lyman had fallen under the full control of Russian and Russian-backed forces in the region. Meanwhile, a group of independent international legal experts accused Russia of committing genocide.

Notwithstanding recent Ukrainian setbacks, Peter Ricketts, a former UK national security adviser, said the west must not back away now.

“Having supported Ukraine and encouraged them to stand up to Russian aggression in the early phase, we’ve now got a real obligation to see it through for the long term,” he said. “It would be disastrous to scale down western support after they’ve done the really hard bit to face the Russians. We’ve got to knuckle down for the long term. Military support can reduce over time and probably the economic support will become more important as the fighting gradually subsides.”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Fighting in Donbas; Putin still eyes Kyiv</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/ukraine-donbas-donetsk-luhansk-fighting-putin-kharkiv-kyiv">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/ukraine-donbas-donetsk-luhansk-fighting-putin-kharkiv-kyiv</a>
GIST	<p>After three months of full-scale war against <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, in which ground troops invaded from several directions and missiles hit targets across the country, right up to the western border with Poland, the focus of the current phase of the conflict is back on the region where Russia has been fighting Ukraine for the past eight years: Donbas.</p> <p>Military analyst Michael Kofman wrote on Twitter last week: “<a href="#">The overall military balance in this war still trends in Ukraine’s favour</a>, given manpower availability and access to extensive Western military support ... But the local balance in the Donbas during this phase is a different story.”</p> <p>How fully and how quickly <a href="#">Vladimir Putin</a> attains his objectives in Donbas may dictate how and whether other parts of Ukraine come back into play. The level of losses sustained will also play a role.</p> <p><b>Donbas</b></p> <p>Russia has abandoned attempts to encircle all Ukrainian forces in Donbas for the more modest goal of <a href="#">creating “cauldrons”</a> – smaller encirclements cutting Ukrainians off from supplies and reinforcements.</p>



Last week, the focus was on the city of Sievierodonetsk, where local governor Serhiy Haidai said Russia had committed 10,000 soldiers and an extra 2,500 pieces of equipment to attacking the city. There are reports that the Russians already control a hotel on the outskirts of the city, after many days of ruthless bombardments.

If Russia takes Sievierodonetsk, it will control the entire Luhansk region, and can increase its focus on parts of Donetsk it still does not control.

“I don’t think the Russian offensive looks stalled, and while sluggish, there is no good way to predict when it will culminate,” wrote Kofman.

### **Occupied territories**

There is no longer any doubt that Russia plans to fully annex parts of Ukraine, as it did with Crimea in 2014. Then, Moscow declined to do the same with the areas it controlled in east Ukraine, preferring instead to prop up separatist administrations there. Now, there is talk of rapid annexation of the parts of Kherson and Zaporizhzhia provinces that Russia took in the first days of the invasion.

Unlike Mariupol, which Russia conquered after bombing it to rubble – and possibly other cities in Donbas that Russia may soon capture – these territories were largely taken with no fighting, so Russia has been able to focus on mopping up dissent and trying to take full control.

The areas have seen an increased crackdown on pro-Ukrainian sentiment, as well as reports that Russia is introducing the rouble and Moscow time zone, announcements that teachers will be retrained in the Russian curriculum, and a series of sinister videos of locals announcing on camera that they had been through “a course of denazification” and no longer support Ukraine.

Formal annexation of this territory could have huge consequences for the prospect of a peace deal. Ukraine will not accept the loss of these areas, but if it launches a counterattack, Russia could claim Ukraine was attacking Russian territory.

### **Kyiv**

Life in the Ukrainian capital feels more normal by the week. The occasional air raid siren and men with guns on the streets are reminders of the war, but cafe terraces are busy, the opera has reopened and the curfew has been pushed back to 11pm. Since the Russians withdrew at the beginning of April, there has been no artillery threat, and no repeat of the booms from the suburbs that characterised the first weeks of the war.

However, Russian-language news outlet Meduza last week [quoted](#) Kremlin-linked sources claiming that Putin had not yet given up on Kyiv and may launch another assault once the battle for Donbas is over.

### **Kharkiv**

As with [Kyiv](#), the Russians attempted to storm the country’s second city in the early days of the war and, as in the capital, they faced unexpectedly strong resistance, were stalled on the outskirts and then pushed back into positions surrounding the city.

In recent weeks, Ukrainian forces have pushed the Russians back further but, unlike with Kyiv, the invaders are still within striking distance of the city. Last Thursday, areas within the city limits were shelled for the first time in two weeks and nine civilians died, according to local authorities.

Military commanders say there is no sign of a new advance on Kharkiv, but the Russians are digging firmly into the positions they still hold, with no plans to retreat all the way to the border as they did elsewhere.

“They are planning something,” said one commander based outside the city last week.

“We may only find out what it is when it happens.”

HEADLINE	05/29 Long Covid confounds doctors
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/long-covid-causes-how-many-treatment">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/long-covid-causes-how-many-treatment</a>
GIST	<p>Emily Caffee, a physical therapist and lifelong athlete, cut her primary care provider slack for suggesting an antidepressant when she complained of fatigue, body aches and brain fog in the months after she became sick with Covid-19 in March 2020.</p> <p>“She did a very thorough medical workup, and a lot of the lab values came back ‘normal’,” said Caffee, a 36-year-old Chicago resident. “We didn’t have very much to go off of in those early days. I think now we have so much more information” about long Covid, which was doctors’ eventual diagnosis for Caffee.</p> <p>While there has indeed been significant research into long Covid over the past two years – including a few studies published last week – some infectious disease experts say we still don’t know enough about the prevalence of the condition, what causes it, and how to treat it.</p> <p>There is a need for more studies on long Covid featuring control groups, and people should continue to take precautions to avoid contracting Covid despite the lifting of restrictions and exhaustion with the pandemic, the experts say.</p> <p>“How worried should people be? A lot more worried than they are,” said Ezekiel Emanuel, a bioethicist at the University of Pennsylvania who was on Joe Biden’s Covid advisory team during the transition. “People are behaving as if the pandemic was over. The problem with long Covid is it’s like the problem of hypertension or another illness that is in the future. We inherently discount the future, especially if the things we need to prevent future bad effects from coming are onerous, like wearing a mask.”</p> <p>After having Covid, Caffee, who was a competitive rower, tried to exercise and return to work in acute care at Northwestern Memorial hospital. But she experienced “unrelenting and crushing” fatigue and anxiety. She struggled at her job and eventually had to take medical leave.</p> <p>The work was “pretty physical, pretty cognitively demanding – doing chart reviews, working in the ICU – and it was just falling apart”, she said. “A lot of the cognitive tasks I just couldn’t handle.”</p> <p>Caffee’s experience mirrors that of the other Covid long-haulers who, like her, participated in a study conducted at Northwestern, published on Tuesday in <i>Annals of Clinical and Translational Neurology</i>. Researchers found that patients continued to have neurological symptoms and fatigue, among other problems, almost 15 months after infection.</p> <p>“We saw that although patients tended to improve slightly over time between the first and the second visit, they still had a lower quality of life compared to the normal US population as pertaining to their impression of cognition and impression of fatigue,” said Dr Igor Koralnik, Northwestern chief of neuro-infectious diseases and global neurology, who oversees the Neuro Covid-19 Clinic.</p> <p>While Covid vaccines weren’t available when Caffee got sick, people who are vaccinated and experienced breakthrough infections did not have much less risk of long Covid compared with people who were not vaccinated, according to a study published on Thursday in <i>Nature Medicine</i>.</p> <p>“Vaccines do protect some but not a whole lot from long Covid. The risk reduction is about 15%, and that’s really a very modest” amount, said Ziyad Al-Aly, clinical epidemiologist at Washington University in St Louis and chief of research at the VA St Louis Health Care System.</p> <p>But it’s still unclear how common long Covid is among people who contract the virus, according to Emanuel and Jennifer Nuzzo, an epidemiologist at the Johns Hopkins Center for Health Security. Estimates on how many Covid survivors develop long Covid range from 10% to 30%.</p>

Those numbers are often based on retrospective “studies that just look at a proportion of patients and then try to characterize based on very imprecise measures” who “experienced certain symptoms beyond a certain period of time, but they are not compared to any kind of control group”, said Nuzzo. “Getting accurate percentages of patients who experience these symptoms post infection can better help us target our resources in order to help people.”

It’s also not clear if long Covid is one unique thing, Nuzzo said.

“What we’re talking about as one condition is likely not one condition,” she said. “There’s a spectrum of symptoms that people experience after an infection.”

Lumping all those together “limits our ability to focus on how to protect or alleviate people who have been suffering”, Nuzzo added.

There has also not been enough research on what treatments are effective against long Covid, Emanuel said.

The medications of people with long Covid need to be compared with those of people who did not develop the condition, he said.

“Are we shooting in the dark – at least initially – until we understand better what the immunological defects are that are driving this? Absolutely. Do we have an alternative? Yes, we can just wait and wait and wait. That doesn’t seem to me to be the best idea,” Emanuel said.

While the infectious disease experts are calling for more research, that does not mean they are trying to diminish long-haulers’ suffering, Nuzzo said. Some people with the condition have expressed anguish that health care providers don’t take their symptoms seriously.

“I think anyone who has ever experienced a chronic illness probably has encountered that frustration at some point, feeling that they know there’s something not right, and they need help and they are not getting the kind of help and understanding from the medical community that they need. And so I think that is also playing out, on top of a list of questions for which science doesn’t have yet great answers,” Nuzzo said.

As providers and long-haulers wait for those answers, the best thing everyone else can do is to get vaccinated against Covid, the infectious disease experts said.

Emanuel also recommended taking steps such as installing HEPA filters; wearing N95 masks; and not dining in restaurants indoors.

“If there were no long Covid or one in 2,000 people got long Covid who had an acute infection”, Emanuel said he would not worry about masking. But the virus poses a threat “of a very serious complication”, long Covid, he said.

Caffee, the physical therapist, tried to recover by making dietary changes, meditating and doing restorative yoga.

It worked.

At the end of summer 2021, she was able to gradually return to work and exercise. She is now back working full-time and feels “90 to 95% better”, she said.

She now treats people with long Covid, who present a range of issues, including balance problems and neuropathy in legs and feet.

“I’m definitely hoping to keep serving this community a bit more because it’s not going away,” she said. “I feel a good sense of validation to be offering what I can to help these patients.”

HEADLINE	05/28 Day 94 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-94-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-94-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>Russia is planning a “full-scale victory in Ukraine by autumn” and may again try to take the capital city of Kyiv</b>, according to independent news source Meduza. Officials close to the Kremlin have said confidence has spread to the leadership of United Russia, the country’s ruling party, that a full-scale victory in Ukraine is possible before the end of the year.</li><li>• <b>The besieged Ukrainian city of Sievierodonetsk appears to be almost completely surrounded by attacking Russian forces.</b> “The Russians are pounding residential neighbourhoods relentlessly,” the governor of Ukraine’s eastern region of Luhansk, Serhiy Haidai, wrote in a Telegram post on Friday. <a href="#">The Kremlin continued to make incremental gains in its offensive in the Donbas region</a>, backed by withering shell fire.</li><li>• <b>The Luhansk governor has said Ukrainian forces may be forced to retreat from the zone to avoid being captured.</b> “The Russians will not be able to capture Luhansk region in the coming days as analysts have predicted,” Haidai posted on Telegram, adding: “However it is possible that in order not to be surrounded we will have to retreat.”</li><li>• <b>The Ukrainian president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has said the situation in Donbas is “very difficult”.</b> In a short video address, he said Russian forces are concentrated in the coastal region of Ukraine and using “maximum artillery” reserves.</li><li>• <b>The Austrian chancellor, Karl Nehammer, has stated that Vladimir Putin is “prepared to discuss a prisoner swap with Ukraine”,</b> after holding talks with the Russian president. Nehammer also said Putin had “given signals that he is quite willing to allow exports via the seaports”, adding: “The real willingness will only become apparent when it ... is actually implemented.”</li><li>• <b>Russia expects to receive 1tn rubles (\$14bn) in additional oil and gas revenues this year</b>, the country’s finance minister announced, noting that the additional income will be spent on Russia’s ongoing invasion of Ukraine.</li><li>• <b>The US president, Joe Biden, accused Putin of attempting to “wipe out” Ukrainian culture and identity</b> during a speech. Biden also said that Putin inadvertently “Nato-ized all of Europe” after Sweden and Finland sought out membership in the alliance following Russia’s invasion of Ukraine.</li><li>• <b>The US is expected to send long-range rocket systems to Ukraine that could be announced as early as next week</b>, <a href="#">reports CNN</a>. The rocket systems, multiple launch rocket system or MLRS, have been a top request of Ukraine officials who say it is necessary to ward off Russia’s advancements.</li><li>• <b>More than 100 Russian national guardsmen have been fired for refusing to fight in Ukraine, court documents show.</b> <a href="#">The cases of the 115 national guardsmen</a>, a force also known as Rosgvardia, appear to be the clearest indication yet of dissent among some parts of Russia’s security forces over the invasion of</li><li>• <b>New UN figures have revealed that 4,031 civilians have died</b> since Russia first invaded Ukraine in February, including 261 children.</li></ul>
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HEADLINE	05/29 Day 95 of the Russia invasion
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-95-of-the-invasion">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/29/russia-ukraine-war-what-we-know-on-day-95-of-the-invasion</a>
GIST	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ukraine is <a href="#">urgently pleading for heavy weapons</a> to repel Russian forces in the eastern Donbas region, as relentless Russian artillery and airstrikes threaten to turn the tide of the war and support for Kyiv’s continued defiance among some west European allies appears to be slipping. Ukrainian officials say they urgently need advanced US-made mobile multiple launch rocket systems, which are capable of striking targets up to 300km away, to halt Russian advances in Luhansk and Donetsk.</li><li>• <b>Ukraine’s president, Volodymyr Zelenskyy, has conceded that not all the land that Russia has seized since it annexed Crimea in 2014 can be recaptured militarily.</b> While he is certain his country will take back the territory Russia has claimed since its 24 February invasion, he said</li></ul>

	<p>other territory could not be recovered by force. “I do not believe that we can restore all of our territory by military means. If we decide to go that way, we will lose hundreds of thousands of people,” he said.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Russia’s defence ministry claims to have captured the strategically important city of Lyman</b> and several other smaller towns and encircled Sievierodonetsk, which Ukraine denies. Zelenskiy said in a Saturday night television address that conditions in Donbas were “indescribably difficult”, and thanked Ukrainian defenders holding out in the face of the onslaught.</li> <li>• <b>At least six superyachts linked to UK-sanctioned Russian oligarchs have “gone dark” on ocean tracking systems</b>, vanishing from the global maps used to locate marine traffic. The owners of these yachts will almost certainly realise they are at risk of being targeted in a global hunt for the assets of Russia’s super-rich.</li> <li>• <b>Russia’s president, Vladimir Putin, has scrapped the upper age limit for military recruits</b> in the face of mounting losses in Ukraine, Tass reported. UK intelligence estimated this month Russia had lost about a third of its ground forces.</li> <li>• <b>Officials in the south-eastern port city of Mykolaiv said at least one person was killed, and at least six injured</b>, in Russian shelling. Two rounds landed in courtyards of high-rise buildings, and one shell fell close to a kindergarten, CNN reported.</li> <li>• <b>Boris Johnson and Zelenskiy discussed concerns over food supplies</b> in a phone call. A Downing Street spokesperson said Johnson told Zelenskiy the UK would continue to support Ukraine’s armed resistance, including by supplying equipment. She added that the UK was involved in “intensive work ... with international partners to find ways to resume the export of grain from <a href="#">Ukraine</a> to avert a global food crisis”.</li> <li>• <b>Putin spoke to French president Emmanuel Macron and German chancellor Olaf Scholz and, according to the Kremlin, he told them that continuing arms supplies was “dangerous”</b>, warning “of the risks of further destabilisation of the situation and aggravation of the humanitarian crisis”. Russia said it was willing to discuss ways to make it possible for Ukraine to resume shipments of grain from Black Sea ports.</li> <li>• <b>Spain is sending a battery of surface-to-air missiles and about 100 troops to the Nato forward presence mission in Latvia</b>, joining about 500 compatriots already present in the Baltic state, El País reported.</li> </ul>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 UNHCR chief disappoints Uighur advocates</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/29/china-bachelet-un-xinjiang-rights-visit/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/world/2022/05/29/china-bachelet-un-xinjiang-rights-visit/</a>
GIST	<p>SHENZHEN, China — U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights Michelle Bachelet ended a long-awaited trip to China with cautious criticism of the country’s crackdown in the Xinjiang region, balanced with praise for Chinese authorities, in what rights advocates called a propaganda win for Beijing.</p> <p>In a news conference in Beijing on Saturday, Bachelet reiterated that her trip was “not an investigation.” She <a href="#">said</a> she was unable to determine the scale of a Xinjiang reeducation and incarceration program directed at ethnic Uyghurs, saying high-profile official visits were not conducive to “discreet work of an investigative nature.”</p> <p>Beijing has repeatedly denied accusations of committing cultural genocide against Muslim Uyghur residents in Xinjiang, where up to an estimated 2 million residents have been incarcerated, according to rights researchers.</p> <p>Bachelet said she encouraged Beijing to review its “counterterrorism” policies to ensure that they complied with international human rights standards and that they were not applied in an arbitrary and discriminatory way. “I have heard you,” she said, regarding those who made appeals to her about specific human rights cases.</p> <p>Bachelet is the first U.N. human rights chief to visit China since 2005, and her trip was the result of years of negotiation. Activists were widely disappointed that she did not criticize China’s human rights</p>

violations in Xinjiang more forcefully or manage to ferret out new details about the situation on the ground.

“The High Commissioner’s remarks were too nonspecific and weak to match the gravity of the situation,” William Nee, advocacy coordinator at Chinese Human Rights Defenders, a D.C.-based nongovernmental organization, [said](#) on Twitter. “To a large extent, this is the sort of white washing that the human rights community was afraid would happen when the news of her visit was announced.”

Secretary of State Antony Blinken raised concerns on Saturday about China’s “efforts to restrict and manipulate her visit,” and he said Bachelet was unable to access individuals who were part of labor transfer programs from Xinjiang to other parts of the country.

“We are further troubled by reports that residents of Xinjiang were warned not to complain or speak openly about conditions in the region, that no insight was provided into the whereabouts of hundreds of missing Uyghurs,” Blinken [said](#) in a statement.

Julian Ku, a law professor at Hofstra University in New York, said Bachelet’s cautious remarks reflect the limited influence the United Nations has over China, with Bachelet trying to use praise to encourage Beijing to make some changes.

“If the U.N. came out and started attacking China, it would be unlikely to make China do anything. At least that’s their perspective,” he said.

Bachelet and Beijing agreed to start an annual senior strategic meeting and set up working groups to discuss human rights and minority rights issues. Ku said these kinds of dialogues have had limited results in influencing China’s policies in past years.

Chinese officials touted her trip as a success. China’s Foreign Ministry released a readout of Vice Foreign Minister Ma Zhaoxu’s media briefing on Saturday, in which he said Bachelet had gotten to see the “real Xinjiang.”

“Certain Western countries, out of ulterior motives, went to great lengths to disrupt and undercut the High Commissioner’s visit, their plot didn’t succeed,” the ministry’s readout said.

On the second day of her mission to China to look into human rights violations in Xinjiang, Bachelet posed for photos with Chinese Foreign Minister Wang Yi, who gave her a book by the nation’s leader, [“Excerpts from Xi Jinping on Respecting and Protecting Human Rights.”](#) and said he hoped the trip would “help enhance understanding ... and clarify misinformation.”

Bachelet [spoke](#) with Chinese President Xi Jinping by video conference on Wednesday, stating afterward that it was an opportunity to “discuss directly human rights issues and concerns in China and the world.”

Beijing has previously said that such a trip would not constitute an investigation into rights abuse claims, which it calls “the lie of the century.”

Ku said that part of the disappointment among rights activists came from heightened expectations that after years of negotiating the trip, Bachelet would have gotten more access.

“If she’d gone five years ago, people would not be as upset,” he said.

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HEADLINE	05/28 Prescribed burn caused NM largest fire
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/us/new-mexico-fire-planned-burn.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/us/new-mexico-fire-planned-burn.html</a>
GIST	A wildfire in northern New Mexico that destroyed at least 330 homes and displaced thousands of people was caused by a planned burn by the U.S. Forest Service, federal fire investigators said on Friday.



The Calf Canyon fire escaped containment lines and merged with the Hermits Peak fire, which was also caused by an out-of-control planned burn, to form the largest wildfire in New Mexico's history.

The combined Calf Canyon/Hermits Peak fire has burned more than 312,000 acres, threatening [remote mountain villages](#) and forcing thousands to evacuate, sometimes repeatedly, over the past two months.

The fire was 47 percent contained as of Friday morning, [the National Wildfire Coordinating Group said](#). It warned that the Memorial Day holiday weekend could pose more challenges for firefighters because of increased traffic and recreational activities that could cause fires in the dry, hot weather. [Fire officials cautioned](#) about the use of, among other things, campfires and wood stoves.

Planned burns, or prescribed fires, are important wildfire management tools that burn vegetation to limit the potential fuel for such blazes. It is rare for them to grow out of control, officials said.

[Forest Service investigators said](#) the Calf Canyon fire emerged from a "pile burn" that had been dormant from January until April, when smoke was reported from the area of the burn, which had concluded on Jan. 29.

Crews monitored the 1.5-acre fire to make sure there were no signs of flames or heat at its edges, investigators said. On April 19 — 10 days after the smoke was reported — the fire reignited and escaped its containment lines.

On April 22, strong winds caused the fire to spread and merge with the Hermits Peak fire, which the [Forest Service said in April](#) had also been caused by an escaped prescribed burn. The Forest Service did not specify how it lost control of both fires.

Debbie Cress, supervisor of the Santa Fe National Forest, said [in a statement](#) that the agency was "100 percent focused on suppressing these fires."

"Our commitment is to manage the public lands entrusted to us by improving the forest's resilience to the many stressors they are facing, including larger, hotter wildfires, historic levels of drought, rising temperatures, and insects and disease," Ms. Cress said.

In response to the fire investigators' findings, New Mexico's governor, Michelle Lujan Grisham, said the federal government must examine its fire management practices and how they account for climate change. "This is a first step toward the federal government taking full responsibility for the largest wildfire in state history, which has destroyed hundreds of homes, displaced tens of thousands of New Mexicans and cost the state and local governments millions of dollars," she said in [a statement](#).

In the Western United States, wildfires are burning more frequently and more intensely and wildfire seasons are growing longer, narrowing the [windows for performing prescribed burns](#). Recent research has suggested that heat and dryness associated with human-caused global warming are major reasons for the increase in bigger and stronger wildfires.

Lisa Dale, a lecturer at Columbia Climate School, said prescribed burns are the best tools available for reducing the long-term risk from wildfires. They clear away vegetation that would otherwise fuel an unwanted fire and recognize that forests depend on fire to be healthy.

"I hope that the aftermath of this incident doesn't lead to long-term policy changes that will continue to limit our ability to use this tool," Dr. Dale said.

She said climate change has made it more difficult to use prescribed fires because fire seasons have increased to seven to eight months from around three months. The growing intensity of fires has also made it more difficult for fire managers to respond.



	<p>The Forest Service’s chief, <a href="#">Randy Moore, said last week</a> that the agency would pause its use of prescribed fires on the agency’s lands.</p> <p>Mr. Moore said that during the pause, the agency would conduct a 90-day review of its protocols and practices for prescribed fires. The pause coincides with the time of year when planned burns are less frequent. More than 90 percent of the agency’s planned fires take place between September and May.</p> <p>Mr. Moore said the Forest Service oversees an average of 4,500 prescribed fires each year and in “99.84 percent of cases, prescribed fires go as planned.”</p>
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HEADLINE	05/28 Testing positive, using ‘backdoor’ into US
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/travel/us-travel-covid-test.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/travel/us-travel-covid-test.html</a>
GIST	<p>Michelle Fishman calls it the “worst-case scenario that you don’t really think through.”</p> <p>After a three-week vacation in Greece, the 52-year-old hotel art consultant from Miami and her husband took pre-departure coronavirus tests required to fly home from overseas. She tested positive, he did not.</p> <p>Although coronavirus travel restrictions have eased across many parts of the world, the United States still <a href="#">requires all international air passengers to present a negative test</a> taken within one day of departure. And <a href="#">according to guidance issued by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention</a>, Ms. Fishman should have isolated and delayed travel for 10 days, but she said she had to get home earlier to officiate at a wedding.</p> <p>Instead, she took advantage of a quirk in the rules to head home after five days (the mandatory self-isolation period required by the Greek government) via a “backdoor” — crossing into the United States by land, which does not require a coronavirus test, rather than by air. Because Canada does not require a test for entry, the couple first flew to Toronto and, after spending a night there, Ms. Fishman and her husband drove across the border into Buffalo and caught a flight home. (There is no testing requirement for flying domestically.)</p> <p>“I had zero symptoms, no fever, nothing. I felt fine and when you’re stateside, the C.D.C. says you can end isolation five days after testing positive, so the same rules should apply when I’m traveling,” Ms. Fishman said. “It makes no sense that I can go to a wedding five days after a positive test in Miami, but if I catch the virus when I’m on vacation I can’t fly home. That should be illegal.”</p> <p>It is not clear how many infected people are using backdoor routes to get home, which can also include flying to Mexico and using a land crossing there, because airlines do not require passengers to provide reasons for canceling or changing flights. But strong anecdotal evidence indicates that some travelers — and travel advisers — are sharing suggestions for how to avoid getting stuck.</p> <p>In flying to Toronto, Ms. Fishman said she was following the guidance of a family friend who used a similar backdoor route to get home to Boston when he tested positive in France in April.</p> <p>Asked if she was worried about infecting other passengers on her long journey home from Greece (she tested positive again, on her fifth day), Ms. Fishman pointed to the <a href="#">C.D.C.’s guidance</a> for people who catch the virus in the United States, which says that asymptomatic people or those with symptoms that have resolved within the five-day isolation period can leave their homes. The recommendation is based on the science that the majority of coronavirus transmission occurs early in the course of the illness, the C.D.C. said.</p> <p>“I slept in the same bed as my husband for five nights and he didn’t catch it, so I don’t think I was contagious by the time I took the flight home,” Ms. Fishman said. “I wore a mask the whole time.”</p> <p>The C.D.C. did not say why it has different policies in place for Americans who test positive at home and abroad, but a spokeswoman for the agency reiterated that travelers should follow the 10-day guidance to</p>

not travel before boarding a flight to the United States, even if they test negative. The Department of Homeland Security declined to comment on the possibility of travelers using land borders to circumvent the testing requirement for air travel.

The United States introduced the testing requirement in January 2021, when fewer than 10 percent of Americans were vaccinated and cases of new infections and hospitalizations were reaching record levels. Now, with higher vaccination rates and less severe cases of the virus, many American travelers, as well as industry representatives, are calling for the requirement to be lifted, arguing that it does little to prevent new variants of the virus from spreading in the United States.

“The existence of these workarounds highlights the absurdity of the current inbound testing policy that is nothing short of ineffective,” said Erika Richter, vice president of communications at the American Society of Travel Advisors, a trade organization. “We’re not following the science.”

David Freedman, president-elect of the American Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene, is concerned by travelers using this method, warning that infectious people taking a flight or public transportation to a border crossing will put a lot of people who are not up-to-date on their vaccinations at risk, including at airport eateries and other places along the way.

“From a public health point of view, the infectious person may be carrying in one of the new variants BA. 4 or BA. 5 which is more infectious and is not so common yet in the U.S.,” he said. “There may be new enhanced vaccines by the fall and introducing these variants sooner rather than later may be bad.”

After testing positive in Stockholm in early April, one American traveler and her wife decided to return to Seattle via Vancouver, because a U.S.- Canada border crossing was relatively close to their home. If she was required to take a test upon arrival at the Vancouver airport, she said, she planned to drive home and isolate there. The woman asked to speak anonymously, because she was afraid of negative repercussions.

“We had symptoms for about two weeks before testing positive. By the time we actually tested positive we felt great, with barely any symptoms, so we felt confident to travel,” she said. “Vancouver airport is pretty chill and low-key. If you look healthy, determined and at ease, no one is going to pull you out of a crowd.”

Upon arrival, Canadian officials often ask passengers health questions, and some airports, like those in Toronto and Vancouver, may randomly select some passengers to take coronavirus tests before being cleared to leave the airport.

The Canadian authorities warn infected people against attempting to transit through Canada, saying that they are not permitted to board flights into the country if they have Covid-19 symptoms or have been infected within 10 days of their departure. Before arriving in Canada, travelers have to fill out a health and travel form on the ArriveCAN app. The form contains a number of questions, including vaccination status and whether a passenger has coronavirus symptoms.

“All travelers arriving in Canada are obligated by Canadian law to respond truthfully to all questions,” said Rebecca Purdy, a senior spokeswoman for the Canada Border Services Agency.

“Travelers who knowingly travel to Canada with an active Covid-19 infection and who do not disclose this information may face penalties and/or criminal charges and foreign nationals may also be denied entry and/or banned from returning to Canada,” Ms. Purdy said.

Mexican authorities did not return requests for comment. U.S. travelers may enter Mexico without testing or quarantine, though they may be subject to health screenings on arrival.

Despite the expense of last-minute bookings, the backdoor routes are also being used by people preemptively, to ensure they can travel home on time.

Hilary Aranda, 39, a user-experience designer, had just finished a two-week dance tour in Italy when 12 Americans in her group tested positive. To avoid a positive result and the possible headaches involved, she never took a test, instead canceling her flight home to Los Angeles for a flight to Tijuana, Mexico, with layovers in London and Mexico City. She then crossed the land border into San Diego and drove home. The changes to her itinerary set her back more than \$2,000.

“Everyone around me had Covid and I knew with my luck that if I took the test, it would come out positive and I didn’t want to risk it,” said Ms. Aranda, who wore a mask on her flights. “Looking back, it was kind of a crazy decision and a big schlep, but I had to get back to my life and kids.”

Some travelers who are more risk-averse, but still determined to avoid isolation in another country, have been using telemedicine services like Quick MD to obtain “documentation of recovery” that allows people to travel to the United States without having to show a negative test. The option is available to travelers who continue to test positive 10 days after their initial positive test or onset of symptoms, as it can take weeks or even months before some people test negative.

During the video or phone consultation with a medical professional authorized to give travel clearance, some travelers have been lying about the date their symptoms started so that they can return home without having to complete the 10-day isolation period.

“It was a three-minute consultation, and I just told the doctor that my symptoms started earlier than they did,” said one traveler, who asked to speak anonymously out of fear of getting into trouble with authorities. He had tested positive in London a day before his scheduled flight home to New York, he said, but returned home three days later.

“I got my clearance document within an hour it was so easy,” he said.

Quick MD did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

Ms. Fishman made it back home in time for the wedding and never developed Covid-19 symptoms, although she said she felt exhausted, which she blamed on the stress caused by the ordeal of trying to get back in time.

“My chances of catching Covid in Miami are just as high as catching it while I travel so the testing requirement is useless in my opinion,” she said.

Travelers contemplating a similar route should be warned that they can be caught out. Ms. Purdy, of the Canadian border services, noted that violating instructions upon entering Canada could lead to up to six months in prison, 750,000 Canadian dollars in fines (around \$586,000) or both.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Russians crowdfund underequipped army</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/world/europe/russian-soldiers-military-supplies.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/world/europe/russian-soldiers-military-supplies.html</a>
GIST	<p>Natalia Abiyeva is a real-estate agent specializing in rental apartments in the city of Nizhny Novgorod, east of Moscow. But lately, she has been learning a lot about battlefield medicine.</p> <p>Packets of hemostatic granules, she found out, can stop catastrophic bleeding; decompression needles can relieve pressure in a punctured chest. At a military hospital, a wounded commander told her that a comrade died in his arms because there were no airway tubes available to keep him breathing.</p> <p>Ms. Abiyeva, 37, has decided to take matters into her own hands. On Wednesday, she and two friends set out in a van for the Ukrainian border for the seventh time since the war began in February, bringing onions, potatoes, two-way radios, binoculars, first-aid gear and even a mobile dentistry set. Since the start of the war, she said, she has raised more than \$60,000 to buy food, clothes and equipment for Russian soldiers serving in Ukraine.</p>

“The whole world, it seems to me, is supporting our great enemies,” Ms. Abiyeva said in a phone interview. “We also want to offer our support, to say, ‘Guys, we’re with you.’”

Across [Russia](#), grass-roots movements, led in large part by women, have sprung up to crowdsource aid for Russian soldiers. They are evidence of some public backing for [President Vladimir V. Putin](#)’s war effort — but also of the growing recognition among Russians that their military, vaunted before the invasion as a world-class fighting force, turned out to be woefully underprepared for a major conflict.

The aid often includes sweets and inspirational messages, but it goes far beyond the [care packages familiar to Americans](#) from the Iraq war. The most sought-after items include imported drones and night vision scopes, a sign that Russia’s \$66 billion defense budget has not managed to produce essential gear for modern warfare.

“No one expected there to be such a war,” Tatyana Plotnikova, a business owner in the city of Novokuybyshevsk on the Volga, said in a phone interview. “I think no one was ready for this.”

Ms. Plotnikova, 47, has already made the 1,000-mile drive to the Ukrainian border twice, ferrying a total of three tons of aid, she says. Last week, she posted a new list of urgently needed items on her page on VKontakte, the Russian social network: bandages, anesthetics, antibiotics, crutches and wheelchairs.

Medical gear is in high demand in part because of the growing firepower of Ukraine’s military as the West increasingly fortifies it with powerful weapons. Aleksandr Borodai, a separatist commander and a member of the Russian Parliament, said in a phone interview that materials to treat shrapnel wounds and burns were needed “in great quantities” on the Russian side of the front. More than 90 percent of Russian injuries in some areas, he said, have recently been caused by artillery fire.

Mr. Borodai said that his units had noted the use of [155-millimeter shells fired by American howitzers](#), and that Russia’s leadership may have underestimated the determination of the West to support Ukraine. “It’s not making the military operation go any faster from our point of view — it’s making our situation more difficult, I don’t deny it,” Mr. Borodai said, referring to Western weapons deliveries. “It’s possible that our military leaders were not ready for there to be such massive support on the part of the West.”

Ukraine’s military, tapping into Western support for its cause, is [benefiting from a far more extensive crowdfunding campaign](#) that is delivering millions of dollars’ worth of donations in items like drones, night vision scopes, rifles and consumer technology.

Most of the groups collecting donations for Russian soldiers appear to be operating independently of the Russian government. They mostly rely on volunteers’ personal contacts in individual units and at military hospitals who pass along lists of what they most urgently need.

In Russia’s state media, these groups are rarely mentioned, perhaps because they undermine the message that the Kremlin has the war firmly in hand. But sometimes the message filters through to the Russian audience.

“Our service members keep saying they have all they need,” a television [segment](#) in April about such volunteers explained, “but a mother’s heart has a will of its own.”

Outside state media, however, supporters of the war are pointing to private donations as a key to victory. Pro-Russian military bloggers, some of them embedded with Russian troops, are urging their followers to donate money to buy night vision equipment and basic drones.

“Our guys are dying because they lack this equipment,” one blogger [wrote](#), while “the entire West is supplying the Ukrainian side.”

The needed equipment, largely imported, can be bought at Russian sporting goods stores or ordered online. Starshe Eddy, a popular military blogger, [wrote](#) that consumer drones made by the giant Chinese company DJI “have become so firmly entrenched in combat operations that it’s become hard to imagine the war without them.”

Ms. Abiyeva, the real estate agent, showed off on her Telegram account a Nikon Prostaff 1000 laser-equipped range finder that she bought for \$400. Nikon [says](#) the item “makes seeing — and ranging — deer out to 600 yards a reality.”

“With this kind of tech everything goes better and faster, wouldn’t you say?” Ms. Abiyeva [wrote](#), adding a winking emoji and a heart emoji.

Ms. Abiyeva says she started crowdsourcing aid after her husband, a captain, was deployed to Ukraine and she felt “powerless” to affect the course of events. She visited the hospital attached to her husband’s local military base and got the contact information for surgeons deployed to the war. Ever since, they have sent requests to her directly and passed her contacts along to colleagues.

When one surgeon at a field hospital asked for arterial embolectomy catheters, for treating clogs in arteries, Ms. Abiyeva found another volunteer in St. Petersburg to make the 700-mile trip to deliver 10 of them immediately. Ms. Abiyeva said that when she met the surgeon on her own trip to the region a week later, he told her that six of the catheters had already been used.

“It’s possible that we saved six lives,” she said.

The Russian military’s apparently urgent need for essential medical equipment and basic, foreign-made consumer devices has led some Russians to wonder how the Kremlin has been spending its enormous military [budget](#), more than 3 percent [of the country’s total economic output](#). On the VKontakte page of Zhanna Slobozhan, a coordinator of donations in the border city of Belgorod, a woman [wrote](#) that talk of raising money for drones and gun sights “makes me think that the army is totally being abandoned to the mercy of fate.”

“Let’s make sure that at least we won’t abandon our guys,” Ms. Slobozhan wrote back. She did not respond to requests for comment.

Mr. Putin visited a military hospital on Wednesday for the first time since the war began. He later told officials that while the doctors he met had assured him that “they have all they need,” the government should “promptly, quickly and effectively respond to any needs” in military medicine.

Still, the notion that Russian soldiers in Ukraine are underequipped is increasingly seeping into Russian public discourse — among both opponents and supporters of the war. In a [documentary](#) about soldiers’ mothers released last weekend by the Russian journalist Katerina Gordeyeva, seen some three million times on YouTube, one woman describes her son using a wire to reattach soles to his boots.

An association of retired Russian officers published an [open letter](#) on May 19 noting that the public was raising funds for equipment the military sorely lacked “even though the government has plenty of money.” The letter excoriated Mr. Putin’s war effort as halfhearted, urging him to declare a state of war, with the aim of capturing all of Ukraine.

But on the ground, the concerns are more prosaic. With the approach of summer, Lyme disease-bearing ticks are out, and volunteers in Belgorod have been making homemade insect repellent, putting it into spray bottles and delivering it to the front.

A group of women collecting donations in the area learned that some of the Russian-backed separatist forces were so badly equipped that they were using shopping bags to carry their belongings. In their Telegram account with about 1,000 followers, the group put out an urgent call for backpacks, along with shoes, Q-tips, socks, headlamps, lighters, hats, sugar and batteries.

	<p>“This is so they understand that they are not alone,” said one of the coordinators of the Belgorod group, Vera Kusenko, 26, who works at a beauty salon as an eyelash extension specialist. “We hope this ends soon.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Seattle future: tourists, few office workers?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/downtown-seattle-considers-a-future-with-lots-of-tourists-and-few-office-workers/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/downtown-seattle-considers-a-future-with-lots-of-tourists-and-few-office-workers/</a>
GIST	<p>Like many small businesses in downtown Seattle, the Pure Food Fish Market has had to adjust to an economy that’s still missing some of its pre-COVID-19 players.</p> <p>While <a href="#">cruise passengers and other tourists are back</a> to snapping up Pure Food’s fresh salmon and halibut and crab, the office workers who used to come to the Pike Place Market fish shop before heading home have been largely absent.</p> <p>So much so that owners Carlee Hollenbeck and Isaac Behar have changed their schedule. Pure Food, which for 70 years stayed open till 6 p.m. for commuter sales, now closes at 5 because office workers “just aren’t showing up as often,” Hollenbeck says.</p> <p>Pure Foods’ changing customer mix highlights an emerging, not entirely expected pattern in downtown Seattle’s pandemic recovery.</p> <p>Early in the pandemic, some business leaders and experts <a href="#">imagined a downtown recovery led by returning office workers</a> followed by a resurgence of tourism and other leisure seekers.</p> <p>But to some degree, the reverse is happening. Even as the repatriation of office workers has stalled, downtown tourism and other leisure activities, including sporting events and live performance, has steadily come back, despite persistent stories of downtown crime and a recent uptick in COVID cases.</p> <p>Visits to Pike Place Market between late March and early May averaged 74% of 2019 levels for the same period, according to cellphone location data from Placer.ai <a href="#">posted</a> by the Downtown Seattle Association. Downtown hotel occupancy in the March-to-May stretch averaged 84% of 2019 levels.</p> <p>“The leisure comeback has been stronger than I think a lot of us would have projected,” says Craig Schafer, whose two downtown hotels, Inn at the Market and Hotel Andra, are at around 80% and 70% occupancy, respectively, for May. After a slow January and February due to omicron, he says, “March just took off.”</p> <p>“We’ve heard a lot about Seattle and we wanted to see it for ourselves,” said Shirley Ellis, an Ohio resident who was at Pike Place Market last week with her family.</p> <p>They’re not alone, apparently. Seattle is the second most popular domestic destination for Memorial Day travelers, after Orlando, Florida, according to <a href="#">booking data by AAA</a>.</p> <p>By contrast, downtown’s offices are getting a lot less love this spring.</p> <p>Although parts of downtown have seen a modest office renaissance — at lunchtime on certain days, the streets around the Amazon spheres at Seventh Avenue and Lenora Street are thronged with badged workers — the overall office worker presence is a still shadow of its pre-COVID self.</p> <p>Since late February, downtown office occupancy <a href="#">has stalled at around 33%</a>, according to Placer estimates, and that’s despite efforts by many employers to lure workers back with everything from hybrid schedules to free food.</p>



Some observers say it's even lower. David Gurry, a senior vice president at commercial real estate agency Colliers, who covers downtown office properties, says office occupancy "on any given day is about 22% right now."

Those estimates are probably missing some returnees. The Placer numbers, for example, only count people in the office three or more days a week. But they do track with low office occupancy rates in several other U.S. cities, including San Francisco and San Jose, California, both of which were at 33.4% as of May 18, according to Kastle Systems, a security firm that [measures office occupancy](#) by employees' key card usage. They also echo national office occupancy rates, which have hovered around 43% since March, Kastle data shows.

"Everybody's trying to figure out, 'What can I do to get my people back in the office?'" says Gurry. "And I can tell you that buying everybody lunch doesn't cut it."

### **Two different economies**

To some degree, the split-screen recovery between tourism/leisure and the office economy reflects the very different drivers behind these two sectors.

The most obvious difference: Tourism and leisure are pursued for pleasure rather than necessity, which may explain why they've been fairly quick to pop back up whenever COVID restrictions are eased or case counts fall.

Consider: While national office occupancy is 43%, attendance at NBA games is back to 95% of 2019 levels and the volume of passengers at airport security checkpoints is at 89%, [Kastle data shows](#). (Passenger volume at Seattle-Tacoma International Airport is at 84% of 2019 levels, according to [Port of Seattle statistics](#); Seattle doesn't have an NBA team.)

Another big difference: downtown tourism and leisure are benefiting from pent-up demand by consumers who postponed activities in 2020 and 2021. "We didn't go anywhere for, like, two years," says Denver resident Chad Chisholm, who was visiting Pike Place Market last week.

The impulse to make up for lost time shows up across the board downtown. As of May 22, roughly 155,000 cruise ship passengers had come through Seattle this season, up 50% over the same period in 2019, [despite a COVID outbreak](#), according to Port of Seattle statistics.

Theaters, nightclubs and other venues, some of the hardest-hit businesses in the city, are also benefiting from consumers catching up.

In January, the 5th Avenue Theatre's first show in two years, "Beauty and the Beast," drew 15,000 attendees a week, more than 2018's popular "Mamma Mia!" The first performances of "Beauty" were "very emotional for the audiences and for the artists," says Bernie Griffin, the theater's managing director.

And, paradoxically, many of the workers who don't want to be back in the office seem OK resuming business travel and conventions. The Seattle Convention Center, which lost most of its bookings in 2020 and 2021 due to COVID, will be back to roughly 70% of its pre-pandemic numbers in 2022.

All those returning business and leisure travelers have brought a much-needed boost for many downtown businesses. Downtown hotels, for example, are seeing those higher occupancy rates without having to cut prices like they did in 2020 and 2021. In April, the average downtown room rate was \$195, up nearly 60% from a year ago and roughly even with April 2019, according to Visit Seattle, a trade group.

Although visitor-dependent businesses know those gains could vanish with another COVID wave, they're "very cautiously optimistic" about 2022 and "bullish about summer in particular," says Visit Seattle's John Boesche. "It's going to feel a lot like a pre-pandemic summer."



### **But tourists aren't enough**

Still, even if downtown tourism were to fully recover this summer, that won't begin to compensate for the loss of office workers, whose lengthening absence creates more uncertainty by month across the entire downtown economy.

Many office landlords and developers aren't sure what to expect from a downtown market with a 20% vacancy rate as of March, up from 11.4% in March 2020, according to Colliers.

Many employers with expiring office leases "don't know what they need long term," says Colliers' Gurry. Prospective clients may ask to tour 50,000-square-foot spaces one day "and then a week later, they want to come tour 20,000-foot options," he adds.

Likewise, restaurants and shops that once counted on office workers at lunch or after work have no idea when, or whether, to staff back up or return to a full schedule. That means even fewer workers coming downtown, which affects still other businesses, and further reduces the downtown workforce, [which numbered 348,000 before the pandemic, according to Downtown Seattle Association estimates.](#)

Many transit stops that used to see lots of commuters aren't as busy. At the northbound stop at South Jackson Street and Fourth Avenue South, boardings and exits on King County Metro buses this spring are just 37% of levels in fall 2019. At Third Avenue and Pine Street, they were just 48% of 2019 levels in late March, [shortly before the stop was closed following several shootings.](#)

Those lower numbers may also reflect commuters' safety concerns in parts of downtown. But other areas also saw declines. April ridership into downtown from Snohomish County via Community Transit, for example, was just 23% of April 2019 levels.

### **Office workers "have considerable leverage"**

[Some employers cite safety concerns as a key reason downtown workers don't want to come back.](#) But another reason is that COVID has undercut the case for being in an office at all.

If the pandemic reminded tourists that things like Pike Place Market and the Space Needle are best experienced in real life, it also showed "a good slice of the American labor force, as well as the people who manage them, that work can be ... a digital experience," says Margaret O'Mara, a University of Washington historian who has written extensively about tech hubs like Seattle.

That discovery, coupled with the tight labor market, has given remote office workers leverage over their employers that could last long past COVID, some business experts and employers say.

Eric Johnson, CEO of Nintex, a Bellevue-based process automation company that often competes for talent with Seattle tech firms, says many of those firms have had to relax their return plans to avoid losing workers. Employers "who might want more people to come back have been a little reticent to really push it," he says.

Some other observers think that leverage will fade if a recession comes and the job market cools.

If employers start to rein in hiring or look for ways to cut costs, any attrition caused by a return-to-office mandate might come to be seen as "an approach to right-sizing head count," Gurry says.

Others aren't so sure. Labor demand is so high in the Seattle area, particularly in the very large office-based tech sector, that workers' leverage "may not significantly change even if we do have a recession," says James McCafferty, director at the Center for Economic and Business Research at Western Washington University.

That may be a conservative scenario, but it's one many downtown businesses seem to be planning for. Back at Pure Food, Hollenbeck and Behar say they aren't counting on a return of office workers.

	“There’s a lot of people that are going to be permanently work from home,” says Hollenbeck. “We’ve kind of adjusted our business plan.”
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## Cyber Awareness

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Pre-installed Android apps security flaws</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.securityweek.com/microsoft-finds-major-security-flaws-pre-installed-android-apps">https://www.securityweek.com/microsoft-finds-major-security-flaws-pre-installed-android-apps</a>
GIST	<p><b>Bug hunters at Microsoft are calling attention to several high-severity vulnerabilities in a mobile framework used in pre-installed Android System apps, warning that exploitation could have allowed the implantation of a persistent backdoor on Android devices.</b></p> <p>According to an advisory released Friday by the Microsoft 365 Defender Research Team, a total of four documented vulnerabilities were found – and fixed – in a mobile framework owned by mce Systems, an Israeli company that provides software to mobile carriers.</p> <p>"Coupled with the extensive system privileges that pre-installed apps have, these vulnerabilities could have been attack vectors for attackers to access system configuration and sensitive information," Redmond warned.</p> <p>As it is with many of pre-installed or default applications that ship on Android devices, Microsoft’s bug hunters warned that some of the affected apps cannot be fully uninstalled or disabled without gaining root access to the device.</p> <p>The researchers shared notes on the discovery of the four flaws – <a href="#">CVE-2021-42598</a>, <a href="#">CVE-2021-42599</a>, <a href="#">CVE-2021-42600</a>, and <a href="#">CVE-2021-42601</a> – that expose millions of pre-loaded Android apps to malware attacks.</p> <p>From the <a href="#">Microsoft advisory</a>:</p> <p>Our research on the framework vulnerabilities began while trying to better understand how a pre-installed System application could affect the overall security of mobile devices. We discovered that the framework, which is used by numerous apps, had a “BROWSABLE” service activity that an attacker could remotely invoke to exploit several vulnerabilities that could allow adversaries to implant a persistent backdoor or take substantial control over the device.</p> <p>The framework seemed to be designed to offer self-diagnostic mechanisms to identify and resolve issues impacting the Android device, indicating its permissions were inherently broad with access to valuable resources. For example, the framework was authorized to access system resources and perform system-related tasks, like adjusting the device’s audio, camera, power, and storage controls. Moreover, we found that the framework was being used by default system applications to leverage its self-diagnostic capabilities, demonstrating that the affiliated apps also included extensive device privileges that could be exploited via the vulnerable framework.</p> <p>The Redmond researchers say some of these vulnerabilities also affected other apps on both Android and iOS devices.</p> <p>"All of the apps are available on the Google Play Store where they go through Google Play Protect’s automatic safety checks, but these checks previously did not scan for these types of issues," Microsoft noted.</p> <p>Details on the bugs were shared with the affected vendor last September 2021 and Microsoft said mce Systems sent an urgent framework update to the impacted providers and released fixes for the issues.</p> <p>"There have been no reported signs of these vulnerabilities being exploited in the wild," Microsoft said.</p>

	The company also warned that several additional mobile carriers were found using the vulnerable framework with their respective apps, suggesting that there could be additional providers still undiscovered that may be impacted.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Anonymous claims attacks against Belarus</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/anonymous-claims-attacks-against/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/anonymous-claims-attacks-against/</a>
GIST	<p>Anonymous-affiliated collective <a href="#">Spid3r</a> claims to have attacked Belarus' government websites in retaliation for the country's alleged support of Russia's <a href="#">invasion of Ukraine</a>.</p> <p>The group made the announcement on <a href="#">Twitter</a>, publishing screenshots of various websites connected with the Belarus state being down, including the Ministry of Communications, the Ministry of Justice and the Ministry of Economy.</p> <p>In addition, the websites of the Ministry of Education, the National Legal Information Center, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Customs Committee, and the State Committee websites were also down.</p> <p>The tweet reads: "Massive attack carried by Anonymous against the Belarusian government for their complicity in the Ukraine invasion. All their biggest government websites are Offline."</p> <p>The hacker group, that has been very vocal about <a href="#">declaring "Cyber War" against Russia</a>, reportedly <a href="#">hacked Russian state TV channels</a> to broadcast live streams from the Ukrainian front lines last February.</p> <p>As for the hacking of the Belarus government websites, Anonymous made the announcement on Sunday. At the time of writing, the majority of these sites seem to have been brought back online.</p> <p>For context, Belarus' Ghostwriter Group was suspected of conducting <a href="#">a phishing campaign last February</a> targeting European governments as they try to manage an influx of Ukrainian refugees.</p> <p>The ties between the Ghostwriter Group and Belarus' government were never confirmed, but there are other reasons behind Anonymous' claims.</p> <p>The country reportedly allowed Russian forces to assemble on its border before attacking (and being pushed back from) Kyiv, and provided medical support to Russian forces during the attack.</p> <p>Anonymous is not the first entity taking steps against Belarus, however. Back in March, Czech-based multinational cybersecurity software company <a href="#">Avast suspended the sale</a> and marketing of its products in both Russia and Belarus.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Turkish airline privacy snafu, data leak</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/turkish-airline-exposes-flight/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/turkish-airline-exposes-flight/</a>
GIST	<p>A low-cost Turkish airline accidentally leaked personal information of flight crew alongside source code and flight data after misconfiguring an AWS bucket, it has emerged.</p> <p>A research team from security comparison site SafetyDetectives discovered the cloud data store left wide open on February 28. It traced some of the leaked information to Electronic Flight Bag (EFB) software developed by Pegasus Airlines.</p> <p>EFBs are information management tools designed to optimize the productivity of airline crew by providing essential reference materials for their flight.</p>

Almost 23 million files were found on the bucket, totalling around 6.5TB of leaked data. This included over three million files containing sensitive flight data such as: flight charts and revisions; insurance documents; details of issues found during pre-flight checks; and info on crew shifts.

Over 1.6 million files contained personally identifiable information (PII) on airline crew, including photos and signatures. Source code from Pegasus's EFB software was also found in the trove, including plain text passwords and secret keys.

Aside from the potential privacy implications for crew members, SafetyDetectives speculated that the leak may have given malicious actors access to highly sensitive information.

"Bad actors could tamper with sensitive flight data and extra-sensitive files using passwords and secret keys found on PegasusEFB's bucket. While we can't be certain that pilots will use the bucket's files for upcoming flights, changing the contents of files could potentially block important EFB information from reaching airline personnel and place passengers and crew members at risk," it argued.

"With millions of files containing recent and possibly relevant flight data, unfortunately, an attacker could have numerous options to cause harm if they found PegasusEFB's bucket."

Crew members could also be the subject of coercion by organized crime groups, while the information contained in the data store could help bad actors identify weaknesses in airport and airline security, the report claimed.

However, there's no indication that any malicious actors found the trove before the research team did. After notifying Pegasus Airlines on March 1, SafetyDetectives noted that the leak was remediated around three weeks later.

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HEADLINE	05/31 'Killer Bee' sting nets 3 BEC suspects
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/bec-suspect-arrested-killer-bee/">https://www.infosecurity-magazine.com/news/bec-suspect-arrested-killer-bee/</a>
GIST	<p>Three Nigerian men have been arrested on suspicion of using malware as part of business email compromise (BEC) attacks on global companies.</p> <p>Interpol revealed that Nigeria's Economic and Financial Crimes Commission (EFCC) arrested the men in the Lagos suburb of Ajegunle and in Benin City, 300kms from the commercial capital.</p> <p>It was coordinated as part of Interpol's "Killer Bee" operation involving law enforcement agencies in 11 countries across southeast Asia. It's funded by the Japan-ASEAN Integration Fund (JAIF) 2.0 and supported by the Singapore Government. Additional threat intelligence work came from long-time private sector partner Trend Micro.</p> <p>The policing organization claimed the men used a Remote Access Trojan (RAT) known as Agent Tesla to compromise organizations including oil and gas companies in Southeast Asia, the Middle East and North Africa.</p> <p>The tool is typically used to access corporate computers with a view to monitoring communications with suppliers and other internal business processes. The scammers can then step in to request money transfers, sometimes masquerading as a supplier or senior executive.</p> <p>It's unclear exactly how the suspects operated, but the end result was to divert funds to accounts under their control, Interpol claimed.</p> <p>One of the men, Hendrix Omorume, has already been charged and convicted of three counts of serious financial fraud and now faces a 12-month prison sentence. The other two are still on trial.</p>

	<p>The three, aged between 31 and 38, were arrested in possession of fake documents, including fraudulent invoices and forged official letters, Interpol said.</p> <p>Nigeria is increasingly a hotbed of cybercrime and fraud. Just last week, a 37-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of masterminding various phishing and BEC schemes.</p> <p>BEC accounted for around \$2.4bn in losses last year – amounting to over a third of total cybercrime losses reported to the FBI.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 New WhatsApp OTP scam</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/new-whatsapp-otp-scam-allow-hackers-hijack-account/">https://www.hackread.com/new-whatsapp-otp-scam-allow-hackers-hijack-account/</a>
GIST	<p>The new WhatsApp scam is currently targeting users in India.</p> <p>On May 23rd, 2022, the founder and CEO of CloudSEK, a contextual AI firm, Rahul Sasi, shared details of a new WhatsApp scam where threat actors try to hijack users' accounts through phone calls.</p> <p>The scam is somewhat unconventional as the victim receives a call from the attacker, who convinces them to make a call at a number starting either with 405 or 67. After the call, the victim is logged out of their WhatsApp account, and hackers hijack them, gaining complete control of the accounts. Here's how Sasi explained the entire attack scenario on <a href="#">Twitter</a>.</p> <p>"First, you receive a call from the attacker who will convince you to make a call to the following number **67*&lt;10 digit number&gt; or *405*&lt;10 digit number&gt;. Within a few minutes, your WhatsApp would be logged out, and the attackers would get complete control of your account."</p> <p>How does the WhatsApp hack work?</p> <p>According to Sasi, the number used for the fraudulent call is a service request for Airtel and Reliance Jio for Call Forwarding when a number is engaged. The scammer forwards the victim's call to a number they own and quickly starts the WhatsApp registration process for the victim's number.</p> <p><i>They choose the option of sending an OTP through phone calls. Because the phone is engaged, the code goes straight to the attacker's phone. That's how the attacker gains control of the victim's WhatsApp account while they get logged out.</i></p> <p>Rahul Sasi on Twitter</p> <p>Although the scam is targeting WhatsApp users in India at the moment, Sasi explained that attackers could hack anyone's WhatsApp account if the hacker gets physical access to the phone and makes calls using this trick.</p> <p>Since every country and service providers use somewhat similar service request numbers, this trick can have a global impact. The only way to protect yourself is avoiding to respond to calls from unknown numbers and not making calls to such numbers.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 New MS Office zero-day flaw: Follina</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/microsoft-office-0-day-follina-vulnerability-warning/">https://www.hackread.com/microsoft-office-0-day-follina-vulnerability-warning/</a>
GIST	<p>Independent cybersecurity research group Nao_Sec has revealed startling details of a new zero-day vulnerability identified in Microsoft Office. Dubbed Follina; researchers claim this flaw can be exploited in the wild, researchers noted.</p> <p>According to researchers, the flaw is named so because of the reference 0438 in the malicious sample, the area code of a municipality in Treviso, Italy, called Follina.</p> <p><b>How Was the Flaw Discovered?</b></p>

On May 27th, a Nao\_Sec researcher posted on [Twitter](#) about discovering an odd-looking Word file titled 05-2022-0438.doc uploaded to VirusTotal from a Belarus-based IP address. The team, including researcher [Kevin Beaumont](#), then started examining the malware.

### Details of the Vulnerability

Further probe revealed that the zero-day could be abused to accomplish arbitrary code execution on vulnerable devices running Windows OS. On their Twitter handle, Nao\_Sec researchers explained in the [blog post](#) the attackers used MS Word's external link for loading the HTML and later used the 'ms-msdt' scheme for executing PowerShell code.

"The document uses the Word remote template feature to retrieve a HTML file from a remote web server, which in turn uses the ms-msdt MSProtocol URI scheme to load some code and execute some PowerShell... That should not be possible."

*Beaumont*

Microsoft Support Diagnostics Tool or MSDT is a utility used to collect and troubleshoot diagnostic data for support experts to analyze and fix the issue. Typically, MS Word documents are used for [executing code through malicious macros](#). However, in this case, the Nao\_Sec research team learned that the code gets executed even when macros are disabled.

Moreover, Microsoft Defender also cannot prevent the execution for now, and Beaumont reported that the protected view isn't activated even when they changed the file to RTF form and runs even without opening the file.

### Possible Dangers

Other researchers, including Didier Stevens and NCC Group's Rich Warren, apart from Kevin Beaumont, also confirmed that this zero-day flaw could be exploited remotely to execute arbitrary code on various versions of MS Office and MS Windows.

Beaumont tested the flaw against numerous Office versions such as Office Pro Plus, Office 2013, Office 2016, and Office 2021 and found that it didn't work against the latest Office and Insider versions. This indicates Microsoft is working on a patch.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 FBI: hackers selling colleges VPN access</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hackread.com/fbi-hackers-selling-us-colleges-vpn-credentials-russian-forums/">https://www.hackread.com/fbi-hackers-selling-us-colleges-vpn-credentials-russian-forums/</a>
GIST	<p>According to the US Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), hackers are selling virtual private network (VPN) access and network credentials used by employees of a "multitude" of colleges and universities in the US. The stolen data is sold on Russian underground cybercrime platforms.</p> <p>The FBI noted that in May 2021, they discovered over 36,000 email/password combinations for addresses ending with .edu. These addresses were available publicly on instant messaging platforms commonly used by cybercriminals.</p> <p><b>Targeted Universities</b></p> <p>According to the FBI's Private Industry Notification <a href="#">[PDF]</a>, most of the credentials part of the data up for sale on Russian hacker platforms were obtained through ransomware attacks and spear-phishing campaigns launched against US educational institutions over the years.</p> <p>The institutions targeted in ransomware attacks in the last couple of years include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ohlone College</li><li>• Centralia College</li><li>• Stratford University</li><li>• The Yeshiva University</li><li>• Stony Brook University</li></ul>



- The University of Miami
- Savannah State University
- National University College
- The University of Maryland
- North Carolina A&T University
- The University of Detroit Mercy
- Florida International University
- The University of Colorado Boulder
- The University of California, Merced
- Phillips Community College of Arkansas

It is worth noting that some of the universities mentioned in the list were [targeted by the cl0p ransomware gang](#), while some were targeted [by Iranian hackers](#). Nevertheless, currently, the stolen data is up for sale for several thousand dollars, depending on the nature of the information.

### **What are the Consequences**

The FBI stated that such sensitive data and network access information, particularly privileged accounts, can enable threat actors to launch more cyberattacks against the organization and the user.

“Such tactics have continued to prevail and ramped up with COVID-themed phishing attacks to steal university login credentials, according to security researchers from a US-based company in December 2021.”

*The FBI*

The credentials may be sold to other hackers, or the seller may ask for donations to offer full access to the data. They can use the credentials to brute-force credential stuffing attacks, drain the account of “stored value,” and leverage/resell credit card numbers and other personally identifiable information. They can also submit fake transactions and launch malicious scams against the account holder or the affiliated entity.

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HEADLINE	05/28 Clop ransomware gang is back
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/clop-ransomware-gang-is-back-hits-21-victims-in-a-single-month/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/clop-ransomware-gang-is-back-hits-21-victims-in-a-single-month/</a>
GIST	<p>After effectively shutting down their entire operation for several months, between November and February, the Clop ransomware is now back, according to NCC Group researchers.</p> <p>"CL0P had an explosive and unexpected return to the forefront of the ransomware threat landscape, jumping from the least active threat actor in March to the fourth most active in April," NCC Group said.</p> <p>This surge in activity was noticed after the ransomware group added 21 new victims to their data leak site within a single month, in April.</p> <p>"There were notable fluctuations in threat actor targeting in April. While Lockbit 2.0 (103 victims) and Conti (45 victims) remain the most prolific threat actors, victims of CL0P increased massively, from 1 to 21," NCC Group <a href="#">added</a>.</p> <p>Clop's most targeted sector was the industrial sector, with 45% of Clop ransomware attacks hitting industrial organizations and 27% targeting tech companies.</p> <p>Because of this, NCC Group's strategic threat intelligence global lead Matt Hull warned orgs within the ransomware group's most targeted sectors to consider the possibility of being this gang's next target and prepare accordingly.</p>



However, despite already leaking data from almost two dozen victims, the ransomware group doesn't seem very active based on the number of submissions on the ID Ransomware service.

### Part of a shutdown process?

While some of the recent victims are confirmed to be new attacks, one theory is that the Clop gang might finally be shutting down their operation after being inactive for so long.

As part of this process, the ransomware gang would likely publish the data of all previously unpublished victims.

This is similar to what the Conti group appears to be [doing right now](#) as part of their own ongoing shutdown.

Whether these are old or new victims will likely be confirmed if they release breach notifications or publish confirmations ([some](#) of [them](#) have [already done it](#)).

### Who is Clop?

The Clop ransomware gang's activity lull is easily explained by some of its infrastructure getting shut down in June 2021 following an international law enforcement operation codenamed Operation Cyclone coordinated by the INTERPOL.

Six individuals suspected of laundering money and providing cash-out services for the Clop ransomware gang were [arrested by Ukrainian authorities](#) after 21 home searches in the Kyiv region.

"The overall impact to CLOP is expected to be minor," cybersecurity company Intel 471 told BleepingComputer.

While targeting victims worldwide in ransomware attacks [since at least 2019](#) (some of its victims include [Maastricht University](#), [Software AG IT](#), [ExecuPharm](#), and [Indiabulls](#)), the Clop gang was also linked to a massive wave of [Accellion data breaches](#) leading to a substantial increase in average ransom payments for the first three months of 2021.

In the Accellion attacks, Clop's operators only exfiltrated large amounts of data from high-profile companies using Accellion's legacy File Transfer Appliance (FTA).

The gang later used this stolen data as leverage to extort the compromised companies, forcing them to pay high ransom demands not to have their data leaked online.

The list of companies that had their Accellion FTA servers hacked by Clop includes, among others, [energy giant Shell](#), [cybersecurity firm Qualys](#), [supermarket giant Kroger](#), and multiple universities worldwide (the [University of Colorado](#), University of Miami, [Stanford Medicine](#), University of Maryland Baltimore (UMB), and the University of California.)

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HEADLINE	05/29 Report: mobile Trojan detections rise
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/mobile-trojan-detections-rise-as-malware-distribution-level-declines/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/mobile-trojan-detections-rise-as-malware-distribution-level-declines/</a>
GIST	<p>Kaspersky's quarterly report on mobile malware distribution notes a downward trend that started in late 2020. Despite the overall demise in malware volumes, the security company reports a spike in trojan distribution, including generic trojans, banking trojans, and spyware.</p> <p>This worrying development underlines an increasing focus on more sophisticated and damaging operations that gradually replace the low-yielding adware and "risk-tools".</p> <p>Adware and "risk tools" remain the most prevalent in terms of distribution volumes, with the latter accounting for almost half of all mobile malware infection attempts detected by Kaspersky in Q1 2022.</p>

## **Rising trojans**

Detections for mobile banking trojans have increased by about 40% compared to the previous quarter, and the number doubled compared to Q1 2021 data.

This type of malware typically overlays login screens on top of legitimate banking or cryptocurrency management apps to steal people's account credentials.

Banking trojans are becoming more widely and cheaply available on hacking forums and Telegram channels, so their adoption by low-skill cyber-criminals increases.

According to Kaspersky, the new family that pushed the distribution figures upwards this quarter is the one they track as "Trojan-Banker.AndroidOS.Bray", which accounted for 81% of all mobile trojan detections in the first quarter of the year.

## **Highlighted Q1 2022 threats**

Kaspersky has noticed some interesting trends at the start of this year, the most notable being a rise in fraud apps pushed via official app store channels such as Google's Play Store.

In the first quarter of 2022, scammers exploited the Russian invasion of Ukraine to offer fake public benefit apps promising financial assistance in response to sanctions and transactional restrictions. Yet, these apps simply stole users' money by directing them to external, malicious websites.

Another highlighted threat is aggressive payday loan applications that target mainly users in India, Brazil, and Mexico.

Kaspersky classifies these as "RiskTool.AndroidOS.SpyLoan", and says these apps request access to the user's contact lists, SMS, and photos during installation. If the payment is late, this information is used for extortion.

In some cases, it has been reported that debt collecting agents working for these platforms call people from the users' contact lists to expose them and increase the pressure to pay the debt.

In other, even more extreme cases, the users of these applications are locked out of their phones if they miss a payment, echoing ransomware threats.

## **Q2 2022 Outlook**

The developments and conditions that fueled trends unfolding in the last quarter remain unchanged, so trojan distribution is expected to continue substituting threats tagged as adware and riskware.

Mobile devices are often a weak link in the security chain, and their presence into corporate environments continues rise. Unfortunately, this is not always done with proper security measures.

Both Google and Apple have come a long way when it comes to implementing protections, mechanisms to protect against permission abuse, and making their app stores safer; but malicious actors still manage to attack users.

All that said, users should keep their devices up to date, install the minimum required number of applications and only from the official stores, scrutinize the requested permissions, read user reviews, review the developer's site, and use mobile security tools.

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HEADLINE	05/29 EnemyBot malware adds exploits
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/enemybot-malware-adds-exploits-for-critical-vmware-f5-big-ip-flaws/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/enemybot-malware-adds-exploits-for-critical-vmware-f5-big-ip-flaws/</a>

EnemyBot, a botnet based on code from multiple malware pieces, is expanding its reach by quickly adding exploits for recently disclosed critical vulnerabilities in web servers, content management systems, IoT, and Android devices.

The botnet was first [discovered in March](#) by researchers at Securonix and by April, when [analysis of newer samples](#) emerged from Fortinet, EnemyBot had already integrated flaws for more than a dozen processor architectures.

Its main purpose is launching distributed denial-of-service (DDoS) attacks and the malware also has modules to scan for new target devices and infect them.

#### New variant additions

A new report from [AT&T Alien Labs](#) notes that the latest variants of EnemyBot incorporate exploits for 24 vulnerabilities. Most of them are critical but there are several that don't even have a CVE number, which makes it more difficult for defenders to implement protections.

In April, most of the flaws related to routers and IoT devices, with CVE-2022-27226 (iRZ) and CVE-2022-25075 (TOTOLINK) being among the most recent ones and Log4Shell being the most notable.

However, a new variant analyzed by AT&T Alien Labs included exploits for the following security issues:

- **CVE-2022-22954:** Critical (CVSS: 9.8) remote code execution flaw impacting VMware Workspace ONE Access and VMware Identity Manager. PoC (proof of concept) exploit was [made available in April 2022](#).
- **CVE-2022-22947:** Remote code execution flaw in Spring, [fixed as zero-day in March 2022](#), and massively [targeted throughout April 2022](#).
- **CVE-2022-1388:** Critical (CVSS: 9.8) remote code execution flaw [impacting F5 BIG-IP](#), threatening vulnerable endpoints with device takeover. The first PoCs [appeared in the wild in May 2022](#), and active exploitation began [almost immediately](#).

Looking at the list of supported commands by a newer versions of the malware, RSHELL stands out, used to create a reverse shell on the infected system. This allows the threat actor to bypass firewall restrictions and get access to the compromised machine.

All of the commands seen in the previous version are still present, offering a rich list of options concerning DDoS attacks.

#### Outlook

Keksec, the group behind EnemyBot, is actively developing the malware and has other malicious projects under its belt: Tsunami, Gafgyt, DarkHTTP, DarkIRC, and Necro.

This appears to be an experienced malware author who shows special care for the newest project, adding new vulnerabilities exploits as soon as they emerge, often before system admins have the chance to apply fixes.

To make matters worse, AT&T reports that someone, likely closely affiliated to Keksec, has released the EnemyBot source code, making it available for any adversary.

The recommendations for protecting against this type of threat include patching software products as soon as updates become available and monitoring network traffic, including outbound connections.

At this moment, EnemyBot's main purpose is DDoS attacks but other possibilities are also to be considered (e.g. cryptomining, access), especially since the malware is now targeting more powerful devices.

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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/italy-warns-organizations-to-brace-for-incoming-ddos-attacks/">https://www.bleepingcomputer.com/news/security/italy-warns-organizations-to-brace-for-incoming-ddos-attacks/</a>
GIST	<p>Italy's Computer Security Incident Response Team (CSIRT) has issued an urgent alert to raise awareness about the high risk of cyberattacks against national entities on Monday.</p> <p>The type of cyberattack the Italian organization refers to is DDoS (distributed denial-of-service), which may not be catastrophic but can still cause damage, financial or otherwise, due to service outages and disruptions.</p> <p>“There continue to be signs and threats of possible imminent attacks against, in particular, national public entities, private entities providing a public utility service or private entities whose image is identified with the country of Italy,” explains the <a href="#">public alert</a>.</p> <p>The signs are posts from the Killnet group's Telegram channel that incited to ‘massive and unprecedented’ attacks against Italy.</p> <p>Killnet is a pro-Russian hacktivist group that <a href="#">attacked Italy two weeks ago</a>, using an old but still effective DDoS method known as ‘Slow HTTP’.</p> <p>As such, the defensive actions proposed by CSIRT this time are associated with this type of attack but also include various generic pieces of advice on good security practices.</p> <p><b>Operation Panopticon</b> Killnet announced “Operation Panopticon” last Tuesday, calling for 3,000 "cyber fighters" to volunteer in 72 hours. The group repeated the call to action several times last week.</p> <p><b>Announcing the operation on Telegram</b> The relevant sign-up form asks the volunteers about their system, origin, age, and Telegram account and provides the required tools to launch resource-depletion attacks.</p> <p>While DDoS seems to be the primary goal, it could be that Killnet plans to use DDoS to force defenders to deal with service disruptions instead of remediating active cyberattacks.</p> <p>Today, Killnet gave an etymological explanation of the word Panopticon, giving data leak innuendos and warning that 90% of the country’s officials ‘will go crazy’.</p> <p><b>Hacker feud</b> Killnet targeting Italian organizations is the result of the group recent targeting of entities in several countries, Italy among them, for supporting Ukraine's resistance against Russia.</p> <p>This sparked action from Anonymous Italy, who started hitting Killnet and doxing some of its members by publishing photos on social media. As a result, Killnet struck back</p> <p>At the moment of writing, the website of CSIRT Italy was intermittently unavailable, but no lengthy connectivity issues were noticed.</p> <p>There have also been reports about Poste Italiane, Italy’s national postal service provider suffering a multi-hour outage this morning.</p> <p>However, the agency has <a href="#">told la Repubblica</a> that this outage wasn’t caused by Killnet attacks but due to a software upgrade that didn’t go as planned.</p> <p>Other <a href="#">local media reports</a> that follow the status of Italian sites closely report that the online portals of the State Police and the Italian Ministries of Foreign Affairs and Defense also appear irresponsive today.</p>

	BleepingComputer can confirm that the sites of the two ministries appear to have been impacted by a DDoS attack at the time of writing.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Phone scams net \$39.5B last year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/05/30/spam-phone-scams-impact/?web_view=true">https://www.helpnetsecurity.com/2022/05/30/spam-phone-scams-impact/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Truecaller announced a research conducted in partnership with The Harris Poll in March of 2022, and the findings detail trends/insights on the impact of spam and <a href="#">phone scams</a> that have increasingly permeated the U.S. over the last 12 months. The study estimates that a staggering \$39.5 billion was lost to phone scams this past year, which is the highest number recorded since Truecaller began researching scam and spam calls in the U.S. eight years ago.</p> <p>According to the study, 33% of Americans report having fallen victim to phone scams, and 20% on more than one occasion. Of those who lost money to phone scams in the last year, the average reported loss was \$577, up 14.94% from the average in 2021 of \$502, and robocallers were reported to have duped 61.1% of these people.</p> <p>The research indicates that despite Federal Communication Commission's (FCC) efforts to regulate via the STIR/SHAKEN framework (a set of FCC standards aimed at protecting Americans from robocalls/scammers) about 68.4 million Americans fell victim to a phone scam in the last 12 months, indicating scammers are sidestepping government regulation and finding more clever ways to defraud victims.</p> <p><b>The impact of spam and phone scams</b></p> <p><b>Men get scammed more than women</b></p> <p>In the last 12 months, 55.6% of those who fell victim to a phone scam were men, compared to only 42.2% of those who were women. Similar to previous years, findings showed that specifically younger men were more likely than older men to lose money to a phone scam, particularly those aged 18-34 (46%) and those aged 35-44 (51%) – compared to men aged 45-54 (24%).</p> <p><b>Seniors and Hispanics are targeted disproportionately</b></p> <p>Sadly, American seniors (65+) reported a higher average of monthly spam calls and texts than their younger counterparts compared to a year ago and the largest target for spam texts are males over the age of 65. Additionally, Hispanics – although they received less spam calls and texts overall – are more likely to have fallen victim to phone scams in their lifetime. A staggering 74% of Hispanic respondents have lost money to a robocall, compared to the Black (43%) and White (65%) adult populations.</p> <p><b>Brute force blocking is causing customers to miss legitimate calls</b></p> <p>Around 63% of Americans feel like they may miss legitimate calls because they suspect they are spam and do not answer. When scammed, 43% of people reported they downloaded a spam blocker and/or caller ID app to further protect themselves. That said, 25% of respondents reported that they missed legitimate commerce calls due to brute-force blocking; i.e. extreme or inaccurate spam filtering – proving many spam filters are not working accurately or effectively. This also hints that improved caller ID, more precise spam analytics, and future innovation within call screening is important to improving the communication environment.</p> <p><b>Neighbor spoofing is on the rise despite regulation</b></p> <p>Neighbor spoofing, i.e. the act of spam calling someone with their same area code, increased over the last year with 51% of respondents answering they've seen an increase in these types of clever robocalls. While there have been measures taken to hinder this type of <a href="#">spoofing</a>, only 7% of respondents said they saw a decrease in same area code robocalls over the last year.</p> <p><b>Spamming has created distrust in the phone call</b></p>

A whopping 86% of Americans said they try and only answer calls if they can identify the person or business they are calling from. Additionally, 60% of Americans prefer to use other methods for communicating – such as text, social media, apps, and email – to avoid phone calls altogether. Modern forms of communication that require less immediacy are increasingly preferable.

### High income earners and young adults are more likely to take action after a scam call

Younger adults preferred to take action by downloading Spam Blocker/Caller ID apps while people above the age of 65 preferred canceling their credit cards/changing account numbers after being defrauded. Additionally, the report saw that higher income groups were more likely to take action after [losing money](#) to a phone scam.

### Additional stats

- Spam text has doubled in the last three years
- Americans received nearly 31 spam calls (mobile or landline) per user per month, and on average, 21.5 of these were robocalls
- 58% of Americans reported receiving more spam calls and/or text messages now than they did a year ago
- 79% of Americans receive a lot of spam calls with an automated voice or a strong accent, indicating an overseas origin
- 52% of Americans said their caller ID for unknown numbers is always/often accurate and 19% say theirs is rarely/never accurate
- 86% of Americans said they will try to only answer calls if they can identify the person or business calling (indicates a strong need for business caller ID & verification)
- The average number of spam texts per month is 19.5, signaling major YoY increases since 2019
- Vehicle warranties (60%) are the most common type of robocalls, followed by Medicare (37%), and taxes (34%)

“The findings from this year are concerning and shed light on the fact that fraudsters and scammers continue to outsmart increased government regulation. Additionally, with many robocalls coming from overseas, the increase in regulation will need to work in parallel with technological advancements provided by caller ID and spam-blocking apps, such as Truecaller,” says [Alan Mamedi](#), CEO at Truecaller.

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HEADLINE	05/30 Linux malware is on the rise
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.csoonline.com/article/3662151/linux-malware-is-on-the-rise-6-types-of-attacks-to-look-for.html#tk.rss_all?&amp;web_view=true">https://www.csoonline.com/article/3662151/linux-malware-is-on-the-rise-6-types-of-attacks-to-look-for.html#tk.rss_all?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>Linux is a coveted target. It is the host operating system for numerous application backends and servers and powers a wide variety of <a href="#">internet of things (IoT)</a> devices. Still, not enough is done to protect the machines running it.</p> <p>"Linux malware has been massively overlooked," says Giovanni Vigna, senior director of threat intelligence at VMware. "Since most of the cloud hosts run Linux, being able to compromise Linux-based platforms allows the attacker to access an enormous amount of resources or to inflict substantial damage through <a href="#">ransomware</a> and wipers."</p> <p>In recent years, cybercriminals and nation-state actors have targeted Linux-based systems. The goal was often to infiltrate corporate and government networks or gain access to critical infrastructure, according to a recent <a href="#">VMware report</a>. They leverage weak authentication, unpatched vulnerabilities, and server misconfigurations, among others.</p> <p>Linux malware is becoming not just more prevalent but also more diverse. Security company Intezer <a href="#">looked at</a> the code uniqueness of malware strains to see how innovative authors are. It found an increase in most malware categories in 2021 compared to 2020, including ransomware, banking <a href="#">trojans</a>, and <a href="#">botnets</a>. "This increase in Linux targeting may be correlated to organizations increasingly moving into</p>



cloud environments, which frequently rely on Linux for their operation," according to a [report](#). "The level of innovation of Linux malware came close to that of Windows-based malware."

As Linux malware continues to evolve, organizations need to pay attention to the most common attacks and harden security every step along the way. "While Linux can be more secure than other operating systems, it's important to note that an operating system is only as secure as its weakest link," says Ronnie Tokazowski, principal threat advisor at Cofense.

These are the six types of attacks on Linux to watch for:

### **1. Ransomware targets virtual machine images**

In recent years, ransomware gangs have started to peek at Linux environments. The quality of the malware samples varies greatly, but gangs such as [Conti](#), [DarkSide](#), [REvil](#) and [Hive](#) are quickly upgrading their skill sets.

Typically, ransomware attacks against cloud environments are carefully planned. According to VMware, cybercriminals try to fully compromise their victim before starting to encrypt the files.

Recently, groups like RansomExx/Defray777, and Conti began to target Linux host images used for workloads in virtualized environments. "This new and worrisome development shows how attackers look for the most valuable assets in cloud environments to inflict the maximum damage," the VMware report read.

Encrypting virtual machine images hosted on ESXi Hypervisors [is of particular interest to these gangs](#) because they know they can significantly impact operations. It's "a common theme in the ransomware landscape to develop new binaries specifically to encrypt virtual machines and their management environments," a [report](#) by security company Trellix read.

### **2. Cryptojacking is on the rise**

[Cryptojacking](#) is one of the most prevalent types of Linux malware because it can quickly produce money. "The intent of this software is to use computational resources to generate cryptocurrencies for an attacker," typically Monero, says Tokazowski.

One of the first notable attacks happened in 2018 when Tesla's public cloud fell victim. "The hackers had infiltrated Tesla's Kubernetes console, which was not password protected," according to [cloud monitoring company RedLock](#). "Within one Kubernetes pod, access credentials were exposed to Tesla's AWS environment, which contained an Amazon S3 (Amazon Simple Storage Service) bucket that had sensitive data such as telemetry."

Cryptojacking has become more prevalent, with XMRig and Sysrv being some of the most prominent cryptominer families. A [report](#) by SonicWall showed that the number of attempts rose by 19% in 2021 compared to 2020. "For government and healthcare customers, this increase was in the triple digits, with cryptojacking growing 709% and 218% respectively," according to the document. The security company counted an average of 338 cryptojacking attempts per customer network, on average.

To target their victims, many gangs use lists of default passwords, bash exploits, or exploits that intentionally target misconfigured systems with weak security, according to Tokazowski. "Some of these misconfigurations can include directory traversal attacks, remote file inclusion attacks, or rely on misconfigured processes with default installs," he says.

### **3. Three malware families—XorDDoS, Mirai and Mozi—target IoT**

The IoT runs on Linux, with few exceptions, and the simplicity of the devices can help turn them into potential victims. [CrowdStrike reported](#) that the volume of malware targeting gadgets operating on Linux increased by 35% in 2021 compared to 2020. Three malware families account for 22% of the total: XorDDoS, [Mirai](#), and Mozi. They follow the same pattern of infecting devices, amassing them into a [botnet](#), and then using them to perform [DDoS attacks](#).



Mirai, a Linux Trojan that uses Telnet and Secure Shell (SSH) [brute-forcing attacks](#) to compromise devices, is seen as the common ancestor to many Linux DDoS malware strains. Once its source code became public in 2016, multiple variants emerged. In addition, malware authors learned from it and implemented Mirai features into their own Trojans.

CrowdStrike noticed that the number of Mirai malware variants compiled for Intel-powered Linux systems [more than doubled](#) in the first quarter of the year 2022 compared to Q1 2021, with the largest increase in variants targeting the 32-bit x86 processors. "Mirai variants continuously evolve to exploit unpatched vulnerabilities to expand their attack surface," according to the report.

Another prosperous Linux Trojan is XorDDoS. Microsoft found that this threat [rose by 254%](#) in the last six months. XorDDoS uses variants of itself compiled for ARM, x86 and x64 Linux architectures to increase the likelihood of a successful infection. Like Mirai, it uses brute-force attacks to gain access to its targets and, once inside, scans for Docker servers with port 2375 open to gain remote root access to the host without the need for a password.

Mozi compromises its targets in a somewhat similar manner but to prevent other malware from taking its place, it then blocks the SSH and Telnet ports. It creates a peer-to-peer botnet network and uses the distributed hash table (DHT) system to hide its communication with the command-and-control server behind legitimate DHT traffic.

The activity of the most successful botnets remains consistent over time, according to Fortinet's [Global Threat Landscape Report](#). The security company discovered that malware authors devote plenty of effort to ensuring that the infection is persistent in time, which means that rebooting the device should not erase the control the hacker has over the infected target.

#### **4. State-sponsored attacks target Linux environments**

Security researchers monitoring nation-state groups have noticed that they increasingly target Linux environments. "A lot of Linux malware has been deployed with the onset of the Russian-Ukraine war, including wipers," says Ryan Robinson, security researcher at Intezer. Russian APT group Sandworm allegedly attacked Linux systems of UK and U.S. agencies a few days before the attack started, according to [Cyfirma](#).

ESET was among the companies that closely followed the conflict and its cybersecurity implications. "A month ago, we've been looking at [Industroyer2](#), an attack against a Ukrainian energy provider," says Marc-Étienne Léveillé, senior malware researcher at ESET. "This attack included Linux and Solaris worms that spread using SSH and perhaps stolen credentials. This was a very targeted attack which clearly had the objective of destroying data from databases and file systems."

The Linux wiper "destroys the whole content of the disks attached to the system by using [shred](#) if available or simply dd (with if=/dev/random) otherwise," according to ESET's paper. "If multiple disks are attached, data removal is done in parallel to speed up the process." Together with CERT-UA, ESET attributed the malware to the Sandstorm APT group, which had used Industroyer in 2016 to cut power in Ukraine.

As for other nation-state actors, [Microsoft](#) and [Mandiant](#) noticed that multiple groups backed by China, Iran, North Korea and others had been exploiting the infamous [Log4j](#) flaw on both Windows and Linux systems to gain access to the networks they target.

#### **5. Fileless attacks are difficult to detect**

Security researchers at [AT&T's Alien Labs](#) saw that multiple actors, including TeamTNT, have started to use Ezuri, an open-source tool written in Golang. Attackers use Ezuri to encrypt malicious code. On decryption, the payload is executed directly from memory without leaving any traces on the disk, which makes these attacks difficult to detect by antivirus software.

The main group associated with this technique, TeamTNT, targets Docker systems that are not configured properly, with the purpose of installing DDoS bots and cryptominers.

## **6. Linux malware targets Windows machines**

Linux malware can also exploit Windows machines through Windows Subsystem for Linux (WSL), a feature of Windows that allows Linux binaries to run natively on this OS. WSL must be installed manually or by joining the Windows Insider program, but attackers can install it if they have elevated access.

Cloud security company Qualys examined the feasibility of carrying out attacks or gaining persistence on a Windows machine by using WSL. It analyzed two techniques so far, [proxying execution](#) and [installing utilities](#), and concluded that both are highly feasible. According to the company's security experts, organizations that want to protect against this type of attack can disable virtualization and the ability to install WSL. It also helps to audit running processes in an ongoing manner.

Attackers also ported functionality from Windows tools to Linux, aiming to target more platforms. One example is [Vermilion Strike](#), which is based on a popular [penetration testing tool](#) for Windows, CobaltStrike, but can be used to target both Windows and Linux. Vermilion Strike offers attackers remote access capabilities, including file manipulation and shell command execution. The tool was used against telecom companies, government agencies, and financial institutions, and the main intent of the attackers was to conduct espionage.

Researchers at Intezer say in their report that "Vermilion Strike may not be the last Linux implementation" of the CobaltStrike Beacon.

## **Protecting against malware that targets Linux environments**

Security is the weakest when sysadmins and developers race against time and deadlines. Developers, for instance, may trust community-sourced code blindly; they copy/paste code from Stack Overflow, run software quickly after cloning a GitHub repository, or deploy an app from Docker Hub directly into their production environment.

Opportunistic attackers take advantage of this "economy of attention." They add cryptominers to Docker containers or create open-source packages with names that are almost identical to heavily used libraries, taking advantage of the occasional spelling mistake on the part of developers.

"Exploitation of open Docker and Kubernetes deployments is pretty interesting: careless people leave their container deployments open to the world, and these installations are easily taken over and used as a bridgehead for further attacks or for other monetization activity, such as Monero mining," says VMware's Vigna.

"I am an avid, evangelistic advocate of open-source software and culture, but one thing that really gives me the heebie-jeebies is the fragility of the chain of trust involved in public software repositories," says Ryan Cribelar, vulnerability research engineer at Nucleus Security. "This isn't a Linux-specific concern, of course, but a malicious library lurking in PyPi or NPM repositories, for example, will arguably cause the Linux admin and security teams the most sleep loss."

For Linux servers, misconfigurations are also a big issue, and it can happen at multiple points along one's infrastructure. "Commonly, firewall or security group settings are misconfigured to allow access to the wider internet, thus allowing external access to deployed applications on Linux servers," says Intezer's Robinson.

Applications are commonly misconfigured to allow access without authentication or using default credentials.

"Depending on the misconfigured application, attackers will be able to steal information or run malicious code on the Linux server," Robinson adds. "Common examples include misconfigured Docker daemons, allowing attackers to run their own containers or misconfigured applications that leak passwords and

	<p>customer information, such as Apache Airflow." Robinson adds that Default configuration often does not equate to secure configuration.</p> <p>Joel Spurlock, senior director of malware research at CrowdStrike, sees another issue: patching. He argues that organizations are "either unable or unwilling to keep machines up to date." Patching should be done regularly, and buzzwords like EDR and <a href="#">zero trust</a> should also be on the menu.</p> <p>Malware targeting Linux environments thrives in a vast playground of consumer devices and servers, virtualized environments, and specialized operating systems, therefore the security measures necessary to protect all these require focus and meticulous planning.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Double-whammy attack: fake alert, bank call</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://blog.malwarebytes.com/scams/2022/05/double-whammy-attack-follows-fake-covid-alert-with-a-bogus-bank-call/?web_view=true">https://blog.malwarebytes.com/scams/2022/05/double-whammy-attack-follows-fake-covid-alert-with-a-bogus-bank-call/?web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>The BBC has revealed details of how a <a href="#">food bank in the UK was conned</a> out of about \$63,000 (£50,000) by scammers who used two separate attacks to fleece their victims.</p> <p>A food bank is a way for people to <a href="#">ensure they don't starve</a>. They are a backstop during times of economic uncertainty, and have been hugely important during the pandemic. An attack on a food bank is an attack on the most vulnerable that's likely to have a significant impact on a community, and which could have a terrible knock-on effect.</p> <p>There's no indication that the fraudsters deliberately targeted the food bank, but whether they did or not, it loses little in awfulness to hospitals impacted by ransomware outbreaks.</p> <p>This is how the two attacks occurred:</p> <p><b>Part 1, a bogus NHS Test and Trace message</b>  The initial attack was a fake NHS Test and Trace message.</p> <p>From PPE offers to test and trace messages, COVID has been a mainstay of phishing since early 2020. No matter the region, the pandemic ushered in an age of fake delivery notifications and bogus "You may be infected" websites.</p> <p>In this case, an SMS message was sent to the target claiming they had been in close contact with somebody who was Covid-19 positive.</p> <p>We have seen these kinds of messages is sent out by <a href="#">SMS and email</a>. Scammers may claim that tests are mandatory (they are not). Sites may collect the victim's name, address, phone number, email, or more besides, and at the end of the flow, they may ask for a "postage fee" and your payment details.</p> <p>In this case the scammers asked for payment for a PCR test. The demand for payment might once have been a red flag, but since the <a href="#">end of free testing in the UK</a>, it isn't.</p> <p>For most people, this is where the scam ends. Sadly this isn't the case here. The small payment was used as a stepping stone to significantly greater losses.</p> <p><b>Part 2, a call from a fake bank</b>  The victims called their bank, suspicious of fraud. By an unfortunate coincidence, the criminals called the food bank trustees back pretending to be their bank.</p> <p>It's possible the fraudsters took the card details given to them in the first scam and figured out which bank it belonged to. For example, the first 4 to 6 digits of a <a href="#">Bank Identification Number</a> (BIN) can reveal the card issuer. Armed with this information, the scammers would know which bank they need to pose as. (It's also</p>

	<p>possible they never mentioned the bank at all—someone already in touch with a bank may not suspect anything amiss from a supposed follow-up call.)</p> <p>Either way, the scammers asked if any “linked accounts” could have been affected. Concerned for the food bank, the victims handed over its bank account details. The scammers proceeded to empty the account of “well over \$63,000” across a two-day period.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 SideWinder behind 1,000 cyberattacks 2yrs</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://thehackernews.com/2022/05/sidewinder-hackers-launched-over-1000.html?&amp;web_view=true">https://thehackernews.com/2022/05/sidewinder-hackers-launched-over-1000.html?&amp;web_view=true</a>
GIST	<p>An "aggressive" advanced persistent threat (APT) group known as SideWinder has been linked to over 1,000 new attacks since April 2020.</p> <p>"Some of the main characteristics of this threat actor that make it stand out among the others, are the sheer number, high frequency and persistence of their attacks and the large collection of encrypted and obfuscated malicious components used in their operations," cybersecurity firm Kaspersky <a href="#">said</a> in a report that was presented at Black Hat Asia this month.</p> <p><a href="#">SideWinder</a>, also called Rattlesnake or T-APT-04, is said to have been active since at least 2012 with a <a href="#">track record</a> of targeting military, defense, aviation, IT companies, and legal firms in Central Asian countries such as Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Nepal, and Pakistan.</p> <p>Kaspersky's APT trends report for Q1 2022 <a href="#">published</a> late last month revealed that the threat actor is actively expanding the geography of its targets beyond its victim profile to other countries and regions, including Singapore.</p> <p>SideWinder has also been observed <a href="#">capitalizing</a> on the ongoing Russo-Ukrainian war as a lure in its phishing campaigns to distribute malware and steal sensitive information.</p> <p>The adversarial collective's infection chains are notable for incorporating malware-rigged documents that take advantage of a remote code vulnerability in the Equation Editor component of Microsoft Office (<a href="#">CVE-2017-11882</a>) to deploy malicious payloads on compromised systems.</p> <p>Furthermore, SideWinder's toolset employs several sophisticated obfuscation routines, encryption with unique keys for each malicious file, multi-layer malware, and splitting command-and-control (C2) infrastructure strings into different malware components.</p> <p>The three-stage infection sequence commences with the rogue documents dropping a HTML Application (HTA) payload, which subsequently loads a .NET-based module to install a second-stage HTA component that's designed to deploy a .NET-based installer.</p> <p>This installer, in the next phase, is both responsible for establishing persistence on the host and loading the final backdoor in memory. The implant, for its part, is capable of harvesting files of interest as well as system information, among others.</p> <p>No fewer than 400 domains and subdomains have been put to use by the threat actor over the past two years. To add an additional layer of stealth, the URLs used for C2 domains are sliced into two parts, the first portion of which is included in the .NET installer and the latter half is encrypted inside the second stage HTA module.</p> <p>"This threat actor has a relatively high level of sophistication using various infection vectors and advanced attack techniques," Noushin Shabab of Kaspersky said, urging that organizations use up-to-date versions of Microsoft Office to mitigate such attacks.</p>
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HEADLINE	05/30 Era of borderless data ending
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/business/the-era-of-borderless-data-is-ending/">https://www.seattletimes.com/business/the-era-of-borderless-data-is-ending/</a>
GIST	<p>Every time we send an email, tap an Instagram ad or swipe our credit cards, we create a piece of digital data.</p> <p>The information pings around the world at the speed of a click, becoming a kind of borderless currency that underpins the digital economy. Largely unregulated, the flow of bits and bytes helped fuel the rise of transnational megacompanies like Google and Amazon and reshaped global communications, commerce, entertainment and media.</p> <p>Now the era of open borders for data is ending.</p> <p>France, Austria, South Africa and more than 50 other countries are accelerating efforts to control the digital information produced by their citizens, government agencies and corporations. Driven by security and privacy concerns, as well as economic interests and authoritarian and nationalistic urges, governments are increasingly setting rules and standards about how data can and cannot move around the globe. The goal is to gain “digital sovereignty.”</p> <p>Consider that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In Washington, the Biden administration is circulating an early draft of an executive order meant to stop rivals such as China from accessing American data.</li> <li>• In the European Union, judges and policymakers are pushing efforts to guard information generated within the 27-nation bloc, including tougher online privacy requirements and rules for artificial intelligence.</li> <li>• In India, lawmakers are moving to pass a law that would limit what data can leave the nation of almost 1.4 billion people.</li> <li>• The number of laws, regulations and government policies that require digital information to be stored in a specific country more than doubled to 144 from 2017 to 2021, according to the Information Technology and Innovation Foundation.</li> </ul> <p>While countries like China have long cordoned off their digital ecosystems, the imposition of more national rules on information flows represents a fundamental shift in the democratic world and alters how the internet has operated since it became widely commercialized in the 1990s.</p> <p>The repercussions for business operations, privacy and how law enforcement and intelligence agencies investigate crimes and run surveillance programs are far-reaching. Microsoft, Amazon and Google are offering new services to let companies store records and information within a certain territory. And the movement of data has become part of geopolitical negotiations, including a new pact for sharing information across the Atlantic that was agreed to in principle in March.</p> <p>“The amount of data has become so big over the last decade that it has created pressure to bring it under sovereign control,” said Federico Fabbrini, a professor of European law at Dublin City University who edited a book on the topic and argues that data is inherently harder to regulate than physical goods.</p> <p>For most people, the new restrictions are unlikely to shut down popular websites. But users might lose access to some services or features depending on where they live. Meta, Facebook’s parent company, recently said it would temporarily stop offering augmented-reality filters in Texas and Illinois to avoid being sued under laws governing the use of biometric data.</p> <p>The debate over restricting data echoes broader fractures in the global economy. Countries are rethinking their reliance on foreign assembly lines after supply chains sputtered in the pandemic, delaying deliveries of everything from refrigerators to F-150s. Worried that Asian computer chip producers might be vulnerable to Beijing’s influence, American and European lawmakers are pushing to build more domestic factories for the semiconductors that power thousands of products.</p>

Shifting attitudes toward digital information are “connected to a wider trend toward economic nationalism,” said Eduardo Ustaran, a partner at Hogan Lovells, a law firm that helps companies comply with new data rules.

The core idea of “digital sovereignty” is that the digital exhaust created by a person, business or government should be stored inside the country where it originated, or at least handled in accordance with privacy and other standards set by a government. In cases where information is more sensitive, some authorities want it to be controlled by a local company, too.

That’s a shift from today. Most files were initially stored locally on personal computers and company mainframes. But as internet speeds increased and telecommunications infrastructure advanced over the past two decades, cloud computing services allowed someone in Germany to store photos on a Google server in California, or a business in Italy to run a website off Amazon Web Services operated from Seattle.

A turning point came after national security contractor Edward Snowden leaked scores of documents in 2013 that detailed widespread U.S. surveillance of digital communications. In Europe, concerns grew that a reliance on American companies like Facebook left Europeans vulnerable to U.S. snooping. That led to protracted legal fights over online privacy and to trans-Atlantic negotiations to safeguard communications and other information transported to American firms.

The aftershocks are still being felt.

While the United States supports a free, unregulated approach that lets data zip between democratic nations unhindered, China has been joined by Russia and others in walling off the internet and keeping data within reach to surveil citizens and suppress dissent. Europe, with heavily regulated markets and rules on data privacy, is forging another path.

In the European Union, the personal data of Europeans must meet the requirements of an online privacy law, the General Data Protection Regulation, which took effect in 2018. Another draft law, the Data Act, would apply new limits on what corporate information could be made available to intelligence services and other authorities outside the bloc, even with a court order.

The Biden administration recently drafted an executive order to give the government more power to block deals involving Americans’ personal data that put national security at risk, said two people familiar with the matter. An administration official said the document, which Reuters earlier reported, was an initial draft sent to federal agencies for feedback.

But Washington has tried to keep data flowing between America and its allies. On a March trip to Brussels to coordinate a response to Russia’s invasion of Ukraine, President Joe Biden announced a new agreement to allow data from the European Union to continue flowing to the United States.

The deal was needed after the top European court struck down a previous agreement in 2020 because it did not protect European citizens from spying by American law enforcement, imperiling the operations of thousands of companies that beam data across the Atlantic.

In a joint statement in December, Gina Raimondo, the U.S. secretary of commerce, and Nadine Dorries, Britain’s top digital minister, said they hoped to counteract “the negative trends that risk closing off international data flows.” The Commerce Department also announced last month that it was joining with several Asian nations and Canada to keep digital information flowing between countries.

As new rules have been introduced, the tech industry has raised alarms. Groups representing Amazon, Apple, Google, Microsoft and Meta argued the online economy was fueled by the free flow of data. If tech companies were required to store it all locally, they could not offer the same products and services around the world, they said.



But countries nevertheless clamped down. In France and Austria, customers of Google's internet measurement software, Google Analytics, which is used by many websites to collect audience figures, were told this year not to use the program anymore because it could expose the personal data of Europeans to American spying.

Last year, the French government scrapped a deal with Microsoft to handle health-related data after authorities were criticized for awarding the contract to an American firm. Officials pledged to partner with local firms instead.

Companies have adjusted. Microsoft said it was taking steps so customers could more easily keep data within certain geographical areas. Amazon Web Services, the largest cloud computing service, said it lets customers control where in Europe data is stored.

In France, Spain and Germany, Google Cloud has signed deals in the past year with local tech and telecom providers so customers can guarantee that their data is overseen by a local company while they use Google's products.

"We want to meet them where they are," said Ksenia Duxfield-Karyakina, who leads Google Cloud's public policy operations in Europe.

Liam Maxwell, director of government transformation at Amazon Web Services, said in a statement that the company would adapt to European regulations but that customers should be able to buy cloud computing services based on their needs, "not limited by where the technology provider is headquartered."

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 US retakes top spot supercomputer race</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/business/us-supercomputer-frontier.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/business/us-supercomputer-frontier.html</a>
GIST	<p>The United States has regained a coveted speed crown in computing with a powerful new supercomputer in Tennessee, a milestone for the technology that plays a major role in science, medicine and other fields.</p> <p>Frontier, the name of the massive machine at Oak Ridge National Laboratory, was declared on Monday to be the first to demonstrate performance of one quintillion operations per second — a billion billion calculations — in a set of standard tests used by researchers to rank supercomputers. The U.S. Department of Energy several years ago pledged \$1.8 billion to build three systems with that "exascale" performance, as scientists call it.</p> <p>But the crown has a caveat. Some experts believe that Frontier has been beaten in the exascale race by two systems in China. Operators of those systems have not submitted test results for evaluation by scientists who oversee the so-called <a href="#">Top500 ranking</a>. Experts said they suspected that tensions between the United States and China may be the reason the Chinese have not submitted the test results.</p> <p>"There are rumors China has something," said Jack Dongarra, a distinguished professor of computer science at the University of Tennessee who helps lead the Top500 effort. "There is nothing official."</p> <p>Supercomputers have long been a flash point in international competition. The room-size machines were first built for cracking codes and designing weapons, but now also play major roles in developing vaccines, testing car designs and modeling climate change.</p> <p>The field was dominated by U.S. technology for decades, but China has become a dominant force. A system there called Sunway TaihuLight was ranked the world's fastest from 2016 to 2018. China accounted for 173 systems on the latest Top500 list, compared with 126 machines in the United States. Japan has been a smaller but still potent contender. A system called Fugaku, in Kobe, took the No. 1 spot in June 2020, displacing an IBM system at Oak Ridge.</p>



Frontier gives that top position back to the lab. The system, built by Hewlett Packard Enterprise using two kinds of chips from Advanced Micro Devices, was more than twice as fast as Fugaku in the tests used by the Top500 organization.

“It is a proud moment for our nation,” said Thomas Zacharia, director of Oak Ridge, at an online briefing from an industry event in Germany. “It reminds us we can still go after something that is bigger than us.”

Building the system, composed of 74 cabinets that each weighs 8,000 pounds, was made more difficult by the pandemic and problems obtaining components in the supply chain crisis, Mr. Zacharia said. But he predicted that Frontier would swiftly have a major impact in studying the impact of Covid and aiding the transition to cleaner energy sources, for example.

Chinese researchers used to participate in the ranking process. But the country has adopted a lower profile in promoting its supercomputer progress as the United States has taken a series of steps to slow China’s technology advances — including by making it harder for some Chinese companies to acquire the foreign chips that can be used to make supercomputers.

But China has been making significant progress in designing its own microprocessors, a key to advances in supercomputers. David Kahaner, an authority in the field who heads the Asian Technology Information Program, reported details last year of two exascale-class supercomputers that he said use Chinese chip technology.

One is a successor to the earlier Sunway machine, called OceanLight, according to a presentation Mr. Kahaner shared at a technical conference. The other machine, Tianhe-3, succeeds a system called Tianhe-1A that in 2010 became the first Chinese machine to take a No. 1 spot on the Top500 list.

More evidence that China broke the exascale barrier emerged in November, when a group of 14 Chinese researchers won a prestigious award from the Association for Computing Machinery, the Gordon Bell Prize, for simulating a quantum computing circuit on the new Sunway system running at exascale speeds. The calculating job, estimated to take 10,000 years on Oak Ridge’s fastest prior supercomputer, took 304 seconds on the Chinese system, the researchers reported in a technical paper.

“They kind of let it leak that they had machines running at exascale levels,” said Steve Conway, an analyst at Hyperion Research. “A lot of the speculation is that they didn’t want to attract more U.S. sanctions.”

Mr. Conway and other experts said they believed that the chips in the new Chinese machines were manufactured in Taiwan, which is true of the key chips in Frontier. China remains far behind in advanced chip-making capability, he said.

The Oak Ridge machine, besides aiding scientists, could help suppliers popularize some new products. Hewlett Packard Enterprise, which in 2019 purchased the supercomputer pioneer Cray, contributed networking technology called SlingShot that had a significant impact on Frontier’s performance, Mr. Zacharia said.

And AMD contributed not only microprocessors but also a kind of graphics processing chip that has mainly been sold for supercomputers by a rival, Nvidia. The same two AMD chips were selected for an exascale system called El Capitan that is scheduled to be installed in 2023 at Lawrence Livermore National Laboratory in California.

A third exascale machine at Argonne National Laboratory in Illinois, using three kinds of chips from Intel, was originally scheduled for delivery in 2021. But manufacturing problems at Intel delayed that system, which is now expected later this year.

# Terror Conditions

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HEADLINE	05/30 Understanding accelerationist narratives
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/understanding-accelerationist-narratives-the-great-replacement-theory/">https://www.hstoday.us/subject-matter-areas/counterterrorism/understanding-accelerationist-narratives-the-great-replacement-theory/</a> <a href="https://gnet-research.org/2022/05/30/understanding-accelerationist-narratives-the-great-replacement-theory/">https://gnet-research.org/2022/05/30/understanding-accelerationist-narratives-the-great-replacement-theory/</a>
GIST	<p>On 14 May 2022, an 18-year-old white male allegedly <a href="#">perpetrated</a> a carefully planned mass shooting targeting Black Americans. He opened fire at a Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, New York, killing 10 and injuring three others; 11 of the individuals shot were Black. Preliminary analysis suggests the attack was an act of terrorism inspired by white supremacist views, particularly the Great Replacement conspiracy theory. The Great Replacement conspiracy theory posits that immigrants and existing populations of non-European descent – namely non-white people from African and Middle Eastern countries – are replacing white European populations in Western countries. It echoes similar conspiracy theories like <a href="#">Eurabia</a> and <a href="#">white genocide</a>. Each of these center around fears of demographic change and white extinction. The Great Replacement Theory first surged into the public consciousness in the immediate aftermath of the March 2019 Christchurch attack, and the subsequent release of the terrorist’s manifesto, whose accelerationist motivations we explored in our <a href="#">previous GNET piece</a>. In fact, the Christchurch shooter titled his manifesto, ‘The Great Replacement’.</p> <p>Therefore, this Insight explores how militant accelerationism manifested within the Buffalo attacker’s worldview, namely his belief in the Great Replacement Theory. It will demonstrate how militant accelerationism forms a critical framework through which we can understand <a href="#">the shooter’s individual radicalisation pathway</a>, and the tactical manifestation of his violent ideations. The shooter’s tactics are <a href="#">consistent with militant accelerationism</a>, which is common among right-wing violent extremists and is designed to exacerbate latent social divisions, often through violence, thus hastening societal collapse. Indeed, the Buffalo attacker’s rhetoric and language indicate a more opportunistic identification with accelerationism as a tactical framework to achieve his white supremacist goals.</p> <hr/> <p>On 14 May 2022, an 18-year-old white male allegedly <a href="#">perpetrated</a> a carefully planned mass shooting targeting Black Americans. He opened fire at a Tops Friendly Market in Buffalo, New York, killing 10 and injuring three others; 11 of the individuals shot were Black. Preliminary analysis suggests the attack was an act of terrorism inspired by white supremacist views, particularly the Great Replacement conspiracy theory. The Great Replacement conspiracy theory posits that immigrants and existing populations of non-European descent – namely non-white people from African and Middle Eastern countries – are replacing white European populations in Western countries. It echoes similar conspiracy theories like <a href="#">Eurabia</a> and <a href="#">white genocide</a>. Each of these center around fears of demographic change and white extinction. The Great Replacement Theory first surged into the public consciousness in the immediate aftermath of the March 2019 Christchurch attack, and the subsequent release of the terrorist’s manifesto, whose accelerationist motivations we explored in our <a href="#">previous GNET piece</a>. In fact, the Christchurch shooter titled his manifesto, ‘The Great Replacement’.</p> <p>Therefore, this Insight explores how militant accelerationism manifested within the Buffalo attacker’s worldview, namely his belief in the Great Replacement Theory. It will demonstrate how militant accelerationism forms a critical framework through which we can understand <a href="#">the shooter’s individual radicalisation pathway</a>, and the tactical manifestation of his violent ideations. The shooter’s tactics are <a href="#">consistent with militant accelerationism</a>, which is common among right-wing violent extremists and is designed to exacerbate latent social divisions, often through violence, thus hastening societal collapse. Indeed, the Buffalo attacker’s rhetoric and language indicate a more opportunistic identification with accelerationism as a tactical framework to achieve his white supremacist goals.</p> <p><b>The Buffalo Shooter: Melding the Great Replacement and Militant Accelerationism</b>  Based on initial analysis of the <a href="#">accused Buffalo attack perpetrator’s manifesto</a> and Discord logs, he did not seem to primarily identify as a militant accelerationist, in contrast to many participants in <a href="#">the global accelerationist network</a>. Instead, he appears to have come to view militant accelerationism as the only</p>

solution to address what he perceived as the most pressing societal problems: those articulated in [the Great Replacement Theory](#). Throughout his archived Discord logs and his manifesto, the alleged attacker stressed that [no political solution](#) existed to solve what he saw as an existential threat: a secret Jewish conspiracy to manipulate immigration and Black Americans to undermine and degrade white American culture.

In the months leading up to the attack, the reported shooter extensively used Discord in a manner similar to journal entries, documenting both his ideological progression and his tactical and operational plans for the shooting. According to the evidence available, he meticulously curated these Discord logs and invited a small number of people into his private server to read them right before committing the attack. It appears that his Discord was designed to be consumed rather than serve as an unfiltered internal monologue. This is vital in accurately understanding how he wanted to be portrayed and how he thought about his own radicalisation process.

In these entries, he did not write like an individual philosophically committed to the militant accelerationist movement, such as someone like [Brandon Russell](#) of [Atomwaffen Division](#) or [Robert Rundo](#) of the [Rise Above Movement](#). Russell and Rundo are deeply entrenched in philosophical and metaphysical justifications for the use of militant accelerationism. They promoted and shaped the brands – the texts, memes, and other iconography – related to [Atomwaffen Division](#) and [Rise Above Movement](#), respectively. In addition, hardened ideologues like these generally focus on long-term, ‘spiritual’ goals of accelerationist action. They pursue apocalyptic destruction for the purpose of spiritual transcendence and rebirth, rather than for addressing ‘material’ concerns like immigration, ethnoseparatism, or ethnic cleansing.

In contrast, the Buffalo attacker’s rhetoric and language indicate a more opportunistic identification with accelerationism as a tactical framework to achieve his white supremacist goals. Also, the Buffalo shooting suspect’s Discord content suggests that he did not intellectually engage with deeper philosophical or spiritual content related to accelerationism. He appears to likely not have had meaningful discussions with anyone about items like the framing of accelerationist goals or notions of apocalyptic rebirth.

Regardless, the alleged perpetrator of the Buffalo shooting directly engaged with militant accelerationism in two distinct ways. First, he mentions militant accelerationism in his Discord (e.g., the meme “A C C E L E R A T E”) and in his manifesto. Notably, these references appear to be either copied from the manifesto of the Christchurch shooter, or heavily inspired by the free-wheeling violent nihilism of 4chan’s /pol/ board. The second feature is the Buffalo suspect’s emulation of the aesthetics and tactics of the Christchurch shooter. He specifically chose to cover his black rifle with messages written in white lettering and painstakingly selected tactical gear that included a GoPro-based live video-streaming capability – akin to the Christchurch shooter’s. He also used the [white supremacist sonnenrad](#) symbol common in neofascist accelerationism networks both in his manifesto and on patches fixed to his plate carrier.

However, the extent to which these actions and aesthetics are copied from the Christchurch attacker makes it difficult to determine the Buffalo shooter’s reasons for using them. While it is possible that the symbols were strategically used to spread a larger message and cause ripple effects like the Christchurch shooter intended, they may also simply have sprung from the mind of a hate-driven 18-year-old who spent considerable time in forums where these symbols and rhetoric are prominent. Still, this content resonated with him. What remains unclear is whether such resonance was an explicit part of his identity. In other words, did the content scrawled on the firearm, the sonnenrad, and the live-streaming kit embody deep beliefs that led to his mobilisation? Or did he simply view them as racist shorthand adapted from the Christchurch shooter?

Ultimately, a key strategic question about any right-wing extremist attacker’s motivations revolves around whether their role in the movement will be as an *innovator* or a *product* of accelerationism. Accelerationist innovators *create* new patterns of attack, which are designed to be replicated, remixed, and revised; neofascist networks often idolise Ted Kaczynski and the Christchurch shooter as innovators. These

terrorists aim to generate products of accelerationism: the copycats and remixers who adopt well-defined pathways for their own goals.

Based on our analysis, the Buffalo shooter was a product of militant accelerationism. Long-term monitoring of militant accelerationist spaces by the authors has shown that core networks in the movement explicitly seek to produce people like the Buffalo shooter, who are motivated by ‘material’ concerns like immigration and embrace accelerationist violence as the only possible solution.

Early reactions to the Buffalo shooter’s attack within 4chan and [Telegram’s Terrorgram community](#) suggest that users within those spaces see him primarily as a product of those attackers who came before. While some rhetoric included knee-jerk claims that the shooting was a ‘fed op’, deeper militant accelerationist channels and actors slowly shifted the discourse by embracing his action as living up to the legacy of the individuals he sought to be viewed alongside. Just a few days after the attack, references to him as a ‘saint’, like the perpetrators of the attacks listed below, became more common. Additionally, key channels began to express hope that many others were similarly influenced by the Christchurch shooter and will eventually carry out their own terrorist attacks like the Buffalo shooter did.

### **The Great Replacement Theory in a Militant Accelerationism Context**

An examination of the available content suggests the arrested Buffalo shooter seems to have spent countless hours consuming and engaging with discourse and imagery of [chan culture](#), an environment that is heavily saturated with militant accelerationism narratives, memes, and worldviews. The Great Replacement theory is one such narrative that is heavily represented on 4chan and that is also regularly found as a [mobilising concept](#) for the neofascist strain of militant accelerationism.

Since the “[year of Europe’s refugee crisis](#)” in 2015, militant accelerationists have carried out a spate of terrorist attacks that were at least in part motivated by the Great Replacement Theory or [other conspiracy theories](#) grounded in fears of white replacement or extinction. While the theory is not exclusive to accelerationists, its thematic components heavily align with accelerationist preoccupations, particularly those who hold white supremacist or neofascist worldviews.

The Great Replacement narrative, like militant accelerationism itself, has broad appeal across ideological and geographic spaces and is well-situated to instigate individuals to violence. This conspiracy theory has [multiple historical links and predecessors](#) that make its use by neofascist accelerationists today neither unique nor mutually exclusive from nationalist-racist uses of the phrase (e.g., through rallying cries like ‘white genocide’ and ‘multiculturalism is genocide’). Nor does violence related to the narrative exist solely within neofascist accelerationist milieus; instead, the narrative provides a foundation upon which accelerationists can build to mobilise others to violence.

Originally [coined](#) by French political thinker Renaud Camus, the Great Replacement Theory’s notion of mass coordinated white replacement is similar in sentiment to the infamous [14 words](#), conceived by white nationalist terrorist David Lane: “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.” The Great Replacement Theory’s foundational fear of white replacement and consequent extinction is echoed in the 14 words, and vice versa. The Buffalo shooter regularly used the 14 words or derivatives of the phrase within his Discord chats, and the Christchurch shooter used the 14 words in his manifesto.

Those who buy into the Great Replacement Theory frequently leverage [claims of victimhood](#) to strategically position themselves as the oppressed rather than the oppressors. As explained in the Institute for Strategic Dialogue’s 2019 [report](#):

“Proponents of the so-called ‘Great Replacement’ theory argue that white European populations are being deliberately replaced at an ethnic and cultural level through migration and the growth of minority communities. This propagation often relies on demographic projections to point to population changes in the West and the possibility that ethnically white populations are becoming minority groups. Certain ethnic and religious groups – primarily Muslims – are typically singled out as being culturally incompatible with the lives of majority groups in Western countries and thus a particular threat.”

For neofascist accelerationists, one solution to this perceived existential threat is violence, justified by their belief that European-Western or American society is set to imminently collapse due to the intentional use of immigrants to undermine it. Frequent framings of this imminent collapse argue that the in-group ([often white, European heritage cultures](#)) is already in a war being directed by unseen forces belonging to a nefarious out-group. For some, this perceived attack begets a moral imperative, if not a moral obligation, to enact a drastic, violent response. In some subsets of accelerationist milieus, the clash between these forces is not just a threat, but rather a sought-after spiritual war that serves as an echo of the Crusades.

### **Influence on Terrorism**

Prior to the mass shooting in Buffalo, the Great Replacement Theory narrative has played an influential role in at least nine terrorist attacks to date:

**2011 Norway Attack.** The terrorist attack in Oslo and Utøya on 22 July 2011, killed 77 and injured more than 300 individuals. The attacker bombed a government building in Oslo before traveling to Utoya island and opening fire on his intended targets – teenagers involved with the Norwegian Labour Party’s youth wing, who he viewed as responsible for the [“deconstruction of Norwegian society”](#) via their enabling of immigration from Muslim countries and the resulting multiculturalism. The terrorist’s 1500-page manifesto decried the alleged “Islamisation” of Europe, a direct allusion to the belief that Europe’s White Christian identity was being diluted by Muslim refugees and migrants taking refuge in European nations.

**2015 Charleston church shooting.** On 17 June 2015, a white supremacist shot and killed nine Black congregants at the Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. White extinction and replacement narratives were present in the radicalisation materials consumed by the Charleston shooter. The shooter was deeply motivated by the conspiracy theories of white genocide in South Africa and Rhodesia; a picture of him wearing the flags of those white supremacist states [circulated in online spaces](#) in the wake of the attack.

**2017 Charlottesville rally.** In August of 2017, a torch-lit procession of nearly 100 young men belonging to various white supremacist organisations [chanted](#), “You will not replace us,” “Blood and soil,” and “White lives matter.” These slogans all stem from racist and antisemitic causes rooted in fears of white replacement and extinction. The next day, violent clashes erupted between the alt-right and white nationalist organisations and counter-protestors, and counter-protester Heather Heyer was [murdered](#) by a white nationalist [associated with Vanguard America](#).

**2018 Pittsburgh synagogue shooting.** Before committing a [mass shooting](#) at the Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, the shooter took to social media to articulate his belief that the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) “likes to bring invaders in that kill our people.” [He reposted content](#) from other users that echoed this sentiment: “Jews are waging a propaganda war against Western civilisation and it is so effective that we are headed towards certain extinction within the next 200 years.” His deeply antisemitic posts represented yet another perceived out-group targeted by white supremacists and militant accelerationists.

**2019 Christchurch mosque shootings.** On 15 March 2019, a gunman slaughtered 51 worshippers and injured another 50 at two mosques in Christchurch, New Zealand. The terrorist’s 74-page manifesto, titled ‘The Great Replacement,’ was uploaded online before the attack. He live-streamed the attack; at the time of writing, copies of the live stream remain easily accessible online. The perpetrator drew inspiration from other accelerationists including the 2011 Oslo shooter and the 2015 Charleston shooter. The Christchurch shooter’s manifesto, though [riddled with the memetic trolling](#) commonplace in far-right online content, clearly featured his embrace of the Great Replacement Theory and has become a favoured document within accelerationist communities.

**2019 Poway shooting.** On 27 April 2019, a gunman entered the Chabad of Poway synagogue in Poway, California, opening fire on those inside, killing one and injuring three others. The shooter’s manifesto is riddled with racism and antisemitism: “I hate anyone who seeks the destruction of my race. [Racist slur] are useful puppets for the Jew in terms of replacing Whites. Of course, they aren’t intelligent enough to



realize that the Jew is using them and they will be enslaved if Europeans are eliminated.” The Poway attacker was, like many others on this list, [inspired by the Christchurch shooter](#). The Buffalo shooter also mentioned the Poway attacker in his Discord logs.

**2019 El Paso shooting.** Before launching his attack on Walmart shoppers in El Paso, Texas, on 3 August 2019, the shooter posted a manifesto titled ‘The Inconvenient Truth’ online. The screed was violently anti-immigrant, drawing inspiration from the Christchurch shooter’s tirade against Muslims: “In general, I support the Christchurch shooter and his manifesto. This attack is a response to the Hispanic invasion of Texas.” The shooter killed 20 and injured another 26 in his purported “fight to reclaim [his] country from destruction.” Themes of weaponised victimhood and justified violence in the spirit of defensive action are prevalent throughout.

**2019 Bærum shooting.** On 10 August 2019, a gunman entered the Al-Noor Islamic Centre mosque in Bærum, Norway, just outside of Oslo, after shooting his teenage step-sister in their family home. The three individuals in the mosque at the time were able to subdue the attacker, though he was reportedly able to fire several shots. The attacker [later shared](#) the Christchurch shooter’s influence on him, and [argued in court](#) that he was acting out of “self-defence” for “the European people.” Before he conducted his attack, the gunman [posted online](#) that his “time is up, [he] was chosen by Saint Tarrant after all ... We can’t let this continue, you gotta bump the race war threat in real life.” In his Discord logs, the Buffalo shooter cited the Bærum attacker as an influence on him.

**2019 Halle shooting.** On 9 October 2019, a gunman attempted to break into a synagogue to attack Jewish worshippers. Upon his failure to enter the synagogue, the attacker shot and killed two random passersby across two locations. The terrorist livestreamed the attack on Twitch, [in which he stated](#) his belief that feminism is the cause for declining birthrates in the West. In his manifesto, [he wrote](#), “even killing 100 golems won’t make a difference, when on a single day more than that are shipped to Europe.” In his Discord logs, the Buffalo shooter referenced the Halle attacker as an influential individual.

### Conclusion

Through his actions and his stated desire to mirror past terrorist attacks, the Buffalo shooter has joined the ranks of the racist and antisemitic extremists that came before him. In his archived Discord logs, he repeatedly spoke to the inspiring influence of these violent actors. He was open about his desire to be imprisoned with previous shooters, as well as his interest in befriending them. In addition, the Buffalo shooter mentions in his Discord logs that the Christchurch massacre was the catalyst for his journey down the Great Replacement Theory rabbit hole. This is a considerable admission in that it illustrates how terrorist actors like the Christchurch shooter continue to have pernicious, reverberating impacts well beyond their initial acts of terrorism. It is unsurprising, then, that the Buffalo shooter utilised whole sections of past terrorist manifestos, especially the Christchurch shooter’s, in his own. He even acknowledged in his Discord messages that the Christchurch shooter had written it better than he could, so he saw no point in trying to rewrite it.

Like the ‘[sainthood](#)’ attribution often assigned to right-wing attackers by supporters, this direct quoting of one manifesto in another illustrates a concerning trend: that militant accelerationism screeds and attacks are meant to be a point of continuity connecting seemingly disparate individuals. Indeed, the ways in which the Buffalo shooter leveraged the Great Replacement Theory and inspiration from previous adherents in an act of militant accelerationist violence is not exceptional, but rather, fits into a recurring, deadly pattern.

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[Read more at the Global Network on Extremism & Technology](#)

HEADLINE	05/30 EU sanctions AQ-linked group
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/05/30/belgium-European-Union-Terrorism-sanctions/5281653961862/">https://www.upi.com/Top_News/World-News/2022/05/30/belgium-European-Union-Terrorism-sanctions/5281653961862/</a>
GIST	May 30 (UPI) -- The member states of the European Union on Monday agreed to impose terrorism-related sanctions against an al-Qaida-affiliated armed insurgent group and two of its leaders.

The European Council, which oversees the 27-member bloc's political direction, identified Hurras al-Din, a Syria-based al-Qaida affiliate, its leader, Faruq al-[Suri](#), and its religious leader, Sami al-Aridi, for asset freezes and travel bans.

"Today's decision confirms the EU's unwavering resolve to combat the enduring terrorist threat posed by al-Qaida, [ISIS] and all their regional affiliates," the council said in [a statement](#).

"The EU remains committed to taking decisive action against those who continue to threaten international peace and security by planning, financing and committing terrorist attacks, and by spreading their deadly terrorist propaganda around the world."

According to the [Counter Extremism Project](#), a nonprofit international policy organization that aims to counter terrorism, Hurras al-Din formed in late February 2018 in a merger of seven Syrian rebel factions with 10 more joining in the following months.

The EU accuses the militant group of being involved in the planning of terrorist operations under the umbrella of al-Qaida and has established training camps in Syria. The group also includes several Europeans among its fighting ranks, it said.

"Through propaganda activities, the sanctioned group and individuals have also played a key role in promoting al-Qaida's violent jihadist ideology and in inciting terrorist acts in support of al-Qaida," the council said. "Hurras al-Din and its two leaders, therefore, pose a serious and continued threat to the EU and to regional and international stability."

The United States under the previous administration of President [Donald Trump](#) designated Hurras al-Din and al-Suri as Specially Designated Terrorists in September 2019.

The State Department's Rewards for Justice also [offered](#) a \$5 million reward for information on al-Suri. Since Septmeber 2016, when the EU became able to impose automatic sanctions against those connected to IS and al-Qaida, 10 individuals and three groups have been targeted.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Militants kill 15 in east Congo village</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/suspected-islamist-militants-kill-15-east-congo-village-2022-05-30/">https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/suspected-islamist-militants-kill-15-east-congo-village-2022-05-30/</a>
GIST	<p>BENI, May 30 (Reuters) - Suspected Islamist militants killed 15 civilians in an attack on a village in northeast Democratic Republic of Congo, a human rights group and local official said on Monday.</p> <p>Fighters believed to be members of the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) stormed the village of Bulongo in North Kivu province after dark on Sunday, pillaging homes and murdering inhabitants that crossed their path, municipality mayor Jean Paul Katembo told Reuters.</p> <p>Bulongo is around 40 km east of the city of Beni in the Ruenzori district.</p> <p>The attackers killed 15 people and set fire to six vehicles, Ricardo Rupande, president of the Ruenzori Sector Civil Society group, said.</p> <p>The ADF is a Ugandan militia that has been active in east Congo since the 1990s and killed scores of civilians, many in middle-of-the-night attacks carried out with machetes and hatchets. It pledged alliance to the Islamic State in 2019.</p> <p>"It was around 9 p.m. when I heard loud blasts. My first reflex was to flee because I immediately thought it was the ADF. They killed 15 of our brothers and sisters," said Bulango resident Kambele Meza Milan.</p> <p>Congo's army spokesman did not immediately respond to calls.</p>



	<p>Militia violence in Congo's mineral-rich east pushed the government to appoint military officers to run North Kivu and neighbouring Ituri province in May last year.</p> <p>Uganda sent in more than 1,000 troops in December to wage joint operations against the ADF. <a href="#">read more</a></p> <p>But attacks have continued unabated as ADF fighters have targeted civilians in retaliation for the military campaigns.</p> <p>More than 60 people were killed over five days of attacks on villages in March and more than 40 during similar assaults in April.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Irish court: ex-soldier guilty of joining IS</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220530-irish-court-finds-ex-soldier-lisa-smith-guilty-of-joining-is">https://www.france24.com/en/live-news/20220530-irish-court-finds-ex-soldier-lisa-smith-guilty-of-joining-is</a>
GIST	<p><b>Dublin (AFP) – Three judges at the Special Criminal Court in Dublin on Monday found former soldier Lisa Smith guilty of joining the so-called Islamic State group in Syria.</b></p> <p>Smith, 40, wept in the dock as judge Tony Hunt read the panel's decision, which was delivered after a nine-week trial.</p> <p>The Muslim convert, who wore a hijab to court, pleaded not guilty to membership of an unlawful terrorist group between October 28, 2015 and December 1, 2019.</p> <p>Judge Hunt said the prosecution had established beyond reasonable doubt that she travelled to Syria "with her eyes open" and pledged allegiance to the group, led by Abu Bakr al-Baghdadi.</p> <p>She was acquitted of a separate charge of financing terrorism by sending 800 euros (\$900) to aid medical treatment for a Syrian man in Turkey.</p> <p>Hunt said there was reasonable doubt that she intended the money to be used for humanitarian purposes rather than to fund terrorism.</p> <p>He granted her bail until a sentencing hearing on July 11.</p> <p>During the trial, which began in January, prosecutors detailed how Smith, who was a member of the Irish Defence Forces from 2001 to 2011, travelled to IS controlled territory in 2015 after converting to Islam.</p> <p>In 2012, she went on pilgrimage to Mecca, and expressed a desire on an Islamic Facebook page to live under Sharia law and to die a martyr.</p> <p>The court was told that she bought a one-way ticket from Dublin to Turkey, crossing the border into Syria and living in Raqqa, the capital of the Islamic State's self-styled caliphate.</p> <p>At the time, the hardline Islamists ruled over vast swathes of Syria and Iraq, attracting thousands of foreign fighters to their cause before the group's territorial defeat in the region.</p> <p>After failing to convince her husband to join her, Smith divorced him in 2016 and married a UK national involved in the group's armed patrols.</p> <p>As IS lost ground to a US-led coalition on the battlefield and towns and cities under its sway fell, Smith was forced to flee Raqqa and then Baghouz, their last remaining stronghold, before returning to Ireland.</p> <p>She was arrested on arrival at Dublin airport on December 1, 2019 with her young daughter.</p> <p>Defence lawyers argued that Smith's presence in IS territory did not make her a de facto member of the extremist Sunni group.</p>

	<p>They have said it could only be argued "at a stretch" that she provided some sort of assistance to the group because she had kept a home for her husband.</p> <p>The three judges sat without a jury at the Special Criminal Court, which adjudicates on cases involving terrorism and organised crime offences.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/30 Iraq: missiles hit base hosting US forces</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iraqi-officials-missiles-hit-iraqi-base-hosting-us-85074491">https://abcnews.go.com/International/wireStory/iraqi-officials-missiles-hit-iraqi-base-hosting-us-85074491</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>BAGHDAD -- At least five missiles hit a sprawling Iraqi army base hosting U.S. troops in the country's western desert Monday, two Iraqi security officials said.</p> <p>The officials said the Grad missiles struck inside the Ain al-Asad base in Iraq's western Anbar province and caused minor damages but no casualties.</p> <p>The officials said the missiles hit only a few meters (yards) from where U.S. forces are stationed. The officials spoke on condition of anonymity because they were not authorized to brief media.</p> <p>The culprits were not immediately known, but the U.S. has previously accused Iran-backed Iraqi militia groups of targeting the American presence in Iraq, including the U.S. Embassy in Baghdad.</p> <p>The attacks were once a frequent occurrence, but have lessened in recent months.</p> <p>In March, Iran attacked Iraq's northern city of Irbil with a dozen ballistic missiles claiming it was targeting Israeli spy centers. Iraq later said an investigation found there no Israeli presence in the areas. The attack was also considered a warning to the U.S., a staunch ally of Israel.</p> <p>U.S.-led coalition forces recently ended their combat mission in Iraq, but continue to play an advisory role to Iraqi forces in the fight against the Islamic State extremist group.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/29 Somalia: bomb blast kills 5, injures 2</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://en.mehrnews.com/news/187334/Terrorist-attack-leaves-7-killed-injured-in-Somalia">https://en.mehrnews.com/news/187334/Terrorist-attack-leaves-7-killed-injured-in-Somalia</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Five Somali troops were killed and 2 others were injured during the blast, according to Anadolu.</p> <p>Al-Shabaab terrorists have claimed responsibility for the blast.</p> <p>No further details have been released on the attack and Somalia's security officials and police have not commented.</p> <p>Al-Shabaab is an armed terrorist group affiliated with al-Qaeda and has carried out many terrorist operations that have killed hundreds of people in Africa.</p> <p>Al-Shabaab terrorists have repeatedly attacked government troops and African Union peacekeepers in the Somali capital, Mogadishu, and carried out several bloody operations in other parts of Africa.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/29 UN report: TTP persistent threat Pakistan</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/ttp-militant-group-persistent-threat-to-pakistans-security-unscreport/">https://www.dailyexcelsior.com/ttp-militant-group-persistent-threat-to-pakistans-security-unscreport/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>ISLAMABAD, May 29: A United Nations Security Council report has reminded about the persistent threat Pakistan's security faces from the Afghanistan-based Tehreek-e-Taliban Pakistan (TTP) and warned that prospects of success of the ongoing peace process with the dreaded terror group were bleak, according to a media report.</p>

The annual report of the 1988 Taliban sanctions committee monitoring team noted TTP's linkages with the Afghan Taliban and explained how the group benefitted from the fall of the Ghani regime last year and touched upon its relations with other terrorist groups operating from Afghanistan.

The banned TTP, the report noted, had up to 4,000 fighters based in east and south-east areas along the Afghanistan-Pakistan border and made up the largest group of foreign fighters based there, according to Pakistan's Dawn newspaper.

This was the team's first report for the committee since the Taliban takeover of Kabul in August last year. The report's original focus was on the Taliban's internal politics, its finances, relations with Al-Qaeda, Daesh, and other terrorist groups, and the implementation of the UNSC sanctions.

The report's launch coincided with the start of the third round of talks between the Pakistan government and TTP last Thursday.

The first round of talks, held in November last year, had yielded a month-long ceasefire that later broke down after TTP accused Islamabad of not fulfilling promises.

The TTP subsequently resumed attacks against Pakistani forces. Statistics tabulated by the Pakistan Institute of Peace Studies reveal that this year, the militant group carried out nearly 46 attacks, mostly against law enforcement personnel, in which 79 people lost their lives.

On March 30, the TTP, emulating the Afghan Taliban's strategy during the US war in Afghanistan, announced a "Spring Offensive" against security forces here.

The peace process, which is being facilitated by Taliban Interior Minister Sirajuddin Haqqani, meanwhile, resumed earlier this month after both sides took confidence-building measures.

The TTP militants have been fighting with the Pakistani security forces since 2008, when the outfit was set up, to press for the implementation of the Sharia laws in the country.

However, the group is being pressed by the Afghan Taliban for talks with the Pakistan government to end the conflict.

The TTP first announced a ceasefire on the occasion of Eid and later extended it after Pakistan released a couple of its (TTP) commanders, who were then on death row.

The round, in which the Pakistani delegation was led by Peshawar Corps Commander Lt Gen Faiz Hamid, ended with both sides presenting their set of demands, the report said.

TTP demanded the withdrawal of security forces from erstwhile tribal areas, annulment of the merger of FATA with Khyber-Pakhtunkhwa province, withdrawal of cases against its fighters and their release, and introduction of Shariah-based 'Nizam-e-Adl' in Malakand Division.

Although security forces here say that these demands are unacceptable and their acceptance would mean capitulation of the State, the government delegation still entered into the third round of talks.

The top priority for the Pakistani government in the latest round is to secure an extension in the ceasefire, which is expiring on May 30.

The Pakistani side has, however, maintained complete silence on the talks.

The UN report has warned that "The group (TTP) is focused on a long-term campaign against the Pakistani state", which implies "that ceasefire deals have a limited chance of success".

	<p>It is important to note that TTP, which has recently been reinvigorated through the return of 17 splinter groups into its fold, feels that maintaining a hardline position in talks with the Pakistan government would help maintain unity in its ranks.</p> <p>Sirajuddin Haqqani, whose Haqqani Network is said to be independent of the grouping within the Afghan Taliban, has been “relied upon more than anyone else in the de facto administration” to act as an intermediary in this process, which highlights the influence that he holds over TTP and other Pashtun groups.</p> <p>The report observed that as compared to other foreign militant groups, TTP was the biggest beneficiary of last year’s Taliban takeover and used this opportunity for conducting attacks and operations in Pakistan.</p> <p>“The TTP also continues to exist as a stand-alone force, rather than feeling pressure to merge its fighters into Afghan Taliban units, as is the prospect for most foreign terrorist fighters,” it further added.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/30 Qatar: Taliban sanctions grow extremism</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.khaama.com/qatar-warns-western-countries-taliban-sanctions-increase-extremism67483/">https://www.khaama.com/qatar-warns-western-countries-taliban-sanctions-increase-extremism67483/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Qatar has pressed the West to strengthen its engagement with the Taliban, stressing that if it does not, Afghanistan will descend into instability and extremism.</p> <p>Sheikh Mohammed bin Abdulrahman al-Thani, Qatar’s foreign minister, has said that keeping the status quo “where the west boycotts Afghanistan and just focuses on part of the humanitarian activities through international agencies” would not keep “Afghanistan intact.”</p> <p>He told the Financial Times, “We will see maybe a rise of extremism.” “We will start to see an economic crisis, which has already started, and this will just drive the people to more radicalisation and conflict,” he added.</p> <p>Qatar is one of the few countries that deals with the Taliban, and Al-Thani justified Qatar’s approach to the Taliban by claiming that isolating the Taliban exacerbates extremism, which is “what [Qatar is] trying to avoid.”</p> <p>He also condemned the Taliban’s attitude and actions toward women, claiming that such extremist behavior would not have occurred if the international community had dealt harshly with the Taliban following the withdrawal of US soldiers from Afghanistan.</p> <p>Qatar is a key country in the relationship between the Taliban and Western communities, and the United States and the Taliban signed a peace pact in Doha, Qatar’s capital.</p> <p>According to Al-Thani, the Taliban maintains a relationship with Western communities through Qatar, but Western policy toward the Taliban remains uncertain.</p> <p>He urged Western governments to collaborate with the Taliban, particularly in the economic sector, to increase employment in Afghanistan following capacity building.</p> <p>The Taliban are in total political, cultural, economic, and diplomatic isolation, as they were in the past decades.</p> <p>Despite the fact that the Taliban has been in control for nine months, no country has yet recognized them. The group’s isolation is primarily due to its restrictive rules against women, escalating gender tensions, the use of violence against citizens, field trials, and human rights violations.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/29 Taliban’s complicated battle against opium</b>
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SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/29/world/asia/afghanistan-opium-taliban.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/29/world/asia/afghanistan-opium-taliban.html</a>
GIST	<p>KANDAHAR, Afghanistan — For years, opium has been the monster too big to slay. One Afghan government after another has pledged to stamp out opium production and trafficking, only to prove unable to resist billions of dollars in illicit profits.</p> <p>The Taliban government of the 1990s ultimately managed to <a href="#">reduce opium cultivation</a>. But after the U.S.-led invasion in 2001, <a href="#">opium taxes and smuggling</a> helped fuel the Taliban’s own 20-year insurgency.</p> <p>Now, with the Taliban back in power, the insurgents turned politicians are again struggling to eradicate opium cultivation and the rampant addiction problem that has come with it. The Taliban announced on April 3 that poppy cultivation had been <a href="#">outlawed</a>, with violators to be punished under Shariah law.</p> <p>But stamping out opium will be more difficult than ever because of a shift by poppy farmers to green energy.</p> <p>Water pumps powered by cheap and highly efficient <a href="#">solar panels</a> are able to drill deep down into rapidly dwindling desert aquifers. The solar panels have helped generate <a href="#">bumper opium harvests</a> year after year since farmers in southern Afghanistan’s poppy-growing belt began installing them around 2014.</p> <p>Now, solar power is a defining feature of southern Afghan life. Tiny solar panels power light bulbs in mud huts, and solar-driven pumps irrigate cash crops like wheat and pomegranates, as well as subsistence farmers’ vegetable plots.</p> <p>The solar arrays have been central to ensuring Afghanistan’s status as the global leader in opium. Afghanistan produced <a href="#">83 percent of the world’s opium</a> from 2015 to 2020, according to the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime. Even with a grinding war and persistent droughts, opium cultivation in Afghanistan rose to <a href="#">224,000 hectares in 2020</a> from 123,000 hectares in 2009, the U.N. reported.</p> <p>The previous American-backed government had spent \$8.6 billion on poppy eradication, but top Afghan officials were deeply <a href="#">complicit in the opium trade</a>, building garish “poppy palaces” in Kabul, the capital, and buying gaudy villas in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. A 2018 government <a href="#">inspector general’s report</a> concluded that the campaign “had no lasting impact.”</p> <p>The Taliban, for their part, have condemned opium as anti-Islamic, as Afghanistan’s poppy crop sustains addicts in <a href="#">Europe and the Middle East</a>, as well as a huge number inside Afghanistan. But given their own deep ties to opium smuggling during the insurgency, Taliban leaders are walking a fine line between hypocrisy and holiness.</p> <p>A widespread crackdown would exacerbate Afghanistan’s already devastating postwar economic collapse and antagonize the Taliban’s core constituency among Pashtun farmers, impoverishing families that rely on the crop to be able to afford food. Eradication would require not only seizing farmers’ solar panels, but also confronting Taliban commanders complicit in the trade — at a time when the movement is facing internal dissatisfaction as the money dries up.</p> <p>The opium trade earned about <a href="#">\$1.8 billion to \$2.7 billion</a> last year, the United Nations has estimated. Opium sales have provided <a href="#">9 to 14 percent of Afghanistan’s gross domestic product</a>, compared with 9 percent provided by legal exports of goods and services.</p> <p>“The cultivation of opium and export of opiates is <a href="#">hugely important for the Afghan economy</a> as a whole, and any implementation of the ban will have wide-ranging consequences,” the Afghanistan Analysts Network, an independent research group, wrote in a report last month.</p> <p>Opium farmers now rely on at least 67,000 solar-power-fed water reservoirs across Afghanistan’s desert southwest, according to a European Union-funded <a href="#">research project</a> by David Mansfield, a consultant who has studied illicit economies and rural livelihoods in Afghanistan for two decades.</p>

The panels, which supplanted more expensive and less reliable diesel to run water pumps, have helped turn the desert green. The [population of previously uninhabited desert](#) areas in Kandahar, Helmand and Nimruz Provinces ballooned to at least 1.4 million people in recent years as solar-driven pumps helped expand arable land, according to Dr. Mansfield's research.

"For many opium farmers, abundant water is now a given," he said. "No one perceives it to have a cost."

The Taliban have taken aim at some solar-powered pumps. On May 13, the governor of Helmand Province, adjacent to Kandahar Province in the opium belt, ordered the police to confiscate panels and pumps so that newly planted poppies would die in parched fields.

"Do not destroy the fields, but make the fields dry out," Gov. Maulave Talib Akhund said in a statement. He added, "We are committed to fulfilling the opium decree."

The opium ban comes amid catastrophic levels of hunger, poverty and drought. The United Nations estimates that [23 million Afghans](#) are suffering acute food deprivation. An economy once propped up by Western aid has [collapsed](#) under sanctions and freezing of Afghan government funds abroad.

"It's too bad for Afghans because poppy is the wealth of the Afghan people," Shah Agha, 35, a poppy farmer from the Zari District of Kandahar, said of the ban.

After investing about \$500 on seeds, fertilizer, labor and other expenses, Mr. Agha said, he hoped to gross about \$5,000 after selling the 20 kilograms of opium he expected to harvest this spring.

The opium ban was met with a collective shrug this spring by southern farmers, many of whom were already harvesting their spring crops. Opium prices surged almost immediately, several farmers said, to roughly \$180 per kilogram from \$60 per kilogram.

"I think they banned it for their own benefit because most of the smugglers and Taliban commanders have tons of opium, and they might want to increase the prices," Mr. Agha said.

Taliban forces this spring seemed unable or uninterested in initiating a swift eradication campaign. Taliban patrols drove leisurely past bountiful opium fields where the spring crop was being harvested. Workers flanked by bright solar panel arrays used curved knives to scrape sticky opium paste from poppy bulbs

The government has indicated that it will allow the spring harvest because it was already underway. But the Taliban have vowed to crack down on farmers who try to cultivate any new crops.

As the United States did during its long presence in Afghanistan, the Taliban have suggested shifting to alternative crops like wheat, pomegranates, cumin and almonds. But even if poppy growing were eliminated, alternative crops would still be at risk because desert aquifers are being rapidly depleted.

Dr. Mansfield said that determining how long the aquifers could continue to supply water was uncharted territory because no one had been able to conduct a rigorous scientific study of the desert groundwater.

Amir Jan Armani, 45, who said he hoped to gross about \$4,000 from 45 kilograms of opium he harvested in Kandahar Province this spring, said he had watched water levels drop precipitously since solar panels arrived.

When farmers used diesel-powered pumps, groundwater levels dropped about three meters a year, Mr. Armani said. But since solar panels arrived, they have sometimes sunk up to nine meters annually. His well is 30 meters deep, he said, but his neighbor's well across the river is 60 meters deep.

"We have to continue to dig our wells deeper and deeper," Mr. Armani said.

He and other farmers have saved money this spring by not paying opium taxes imposed by the Taliban in previous years. No such taxes have been levied this year, said Noor Ahmad Saied, the Taliban's director of information in Kandahar.

Many farmers in Arghandab, a district in Kandahar famous for its pomegranates, have chopped down pomegranate trees killed by drought or fighting. They planted poppies instead.

Even when prices are high, many poppy farmers say, they earn only about \$2 a day for each family member. They are at the very bottom of a narcotic trafficking system in which profits increase exponentially from growers to middlemen to processing labs to major cross-border traffickers.

Ehsanullah Shakir, 31, an opium smuggler in Helmand Province, said Taliban enforcement of the ban this year had been uneven so far. Some farmers had planted almonds, cumin or basil after harvesting their spring poppies, he said, but others had ignored the ban and planted poppies for a second harvest. And opium markets continue to operate as usual in many areas, Mr. Shakir said.

Farmers whose poppy fields were plowed under by the previous government could send their sons to paying jobs as soldiers or police officers — or to the constellation of unskilled jobs provided by the United States and NATO. But those options are gone, and unemployment has soared under the Taliban.

In the Maiwand District of Kandahar, Nek Nazar, 41, worked to install a new water pump at the edge of his poppy field. He began growing poppies five years ago, he said, because they produced far more income than the wheat he had grown.

Mr. Nazar spoke as though the crop shift had been preordained and was not a matter of choice. For him, it was either plant poppies or starve.

"Growing poppies is the only option to survive right now," he said.

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## Suspicious, Unusual

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HEADLINE	05/30 First Cat-2 storm landfall east Pacific in May
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/world/americas/hurricane-mexico-agatha-forecast.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/world/americas/hurricane-mexico-agatha-forecast.html</a>
GIST	<p>Agatha, the year's first named storm in the eastern Pacific region, was moving across southern Mexico early Tuesday as a tropical storm, hours after making landfall as a Category 2 hurricane.</p> <p>Agatha came ashore on Monday afternoon just west of Puerto Angel, a fishing town in the Mexican state of Oaxaca, with heavy rains and winds of nearly 105 miles per hour — strong enough to uproot trees, cause major power losses and rip roofs off well-built homes.</p> <p>As of 10 p.m. local time, the storm was moving northeast through Oaxaca at nearly eight miles per hour, the U.S. National Hurricane Center <a href="#">said in an advisory</a>. Parts of the state could receive as much as 16 inches of rain, with isolated amounts of 20 inches, the center said, and a portion of southern Mexico was at risk for mudslides and life-threatening flash floods on Tuesday.</p> <p>But Agatha's maximum sustained winds had already decreased to about 70 miles per hour and the storm was expected to dissipate over Mexico by Tuesday afternoon, the Hurricane Center said.</p> <p>Agatha's arrival marked the first time that a Category 2 storm had made landfall in the eastern Pacific in the month of May, said Dan Pydynowski, a senior meteorologist at AccuWeather.</p> <p>Before Agatha, only two Category 1 hurricanes had made landfall in the region: Hurricane Barbara on May 29, 2013, and, coincidentally, Hurricane Agatha on May 24, 1971, Mr. Pydynowski said.</p>



Home to surfing hot spots, the coast of Oaxaca has long attracted tourists from around the world who are drawn to the golden sand beaches and laid back vibes of the Pacific region. The beach town [Zipolite](#), near where Agatha made landfall, has become an increasingly popular tourism destination, particularly for the L.G.B.T.Q. community.

The industry has been an important driver for the state's economy. In 2019, before the pandemic decimated tourism in the region, more than 200,000 foreign tourists traveled to Oaxaca State, largely visiting the colonial capital city of Oaxaca. But more than 80,000 foreigners also chose the beaches of Huatulco and Puerto Escondido.

The industry generated more than 159,000 jobs that year, according to government figures, and yielded more than \$29 million in income across those three destinations, an important economic boost for one of the poorest states in Mexico.

Given the importance of tourism to Oaxaca, the arrival of a potentially devastating storm could be catastrophic for the more than half a million people who call the coastal region home.

Alejandro Murat Hinojosa, governor of Oaxaca, said the country's national defense, the military, the Mexican National Guard and the Navy had been deployed to respond to the hurricane.

Classes had been canceled along the coast on Monday and Tuesday, he said.

Images shared on social media Monday morning showed residents of the Oaxacan coast preparing for the worst, including [boarding up buildings](#). Videos showed winds beginning to pick up, tossing palm trees back and forth as waves crashed with increasing ferocity.

Before the storm, the head of the Huatulco Hotel and Motel Association, Pia Overholzer, said the city had an occupancy of around 60 percent with some 3,500 tourists.

Julián Herrera Velarde, representative of the Oaxaca tourism ministry in Puerto Escondido, said the town had some 2,700 visitors, of whom only 40 had been transferred to a temporary shelter.

Although not as prone to hurricanes as the Caribbean, the Pacific Coast of Mexico is no stranger to deadly storms. In 1997, Hurricane Pauline [slammed into the coasts](#) of Oaxaca and neighboring Guerrero, leaving more than 200 people dead and some 300,000 homeless.

More recently, in 2017, Tropical Storm Beatriz wreaked havoc across the state, provoking widespread flooding and mudslides. At least [two people were killed](#) and hundreds of families saw their homes damaged.

Agatha formed off the Mexican coast and [was named on Saturday](#), not long after the official start of the eastern Pacific hurricane season, which runs from May 15 to Nov. 30.

The Atlantic hurricane season — the term used for storms that form in the Gulf of Mexico, the Caribbean Sea and the Atlantic Ocean — runs from June 1 to Nov. 30. Those regions account for the severest hurricanes that have struck the United States, Mr. Feltgen said.

This year is on track to be the first since 2014 that a hurricane has not formed in the Atlantic before the official start of the season. However, the season generally does not peak until mid-August to late October, and forecasters [predict](#) above-average Atlantic activity this year, with six to 10 hurricanes and three to six major hurricanes, [the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration said last week](#).

If the prediction comes true, this year will be the seventh consecutive above-average hurricane season.

	The causes for the predicted intensity of hurricanes cited by NOAA include the climate pattern known as La Niña, which affects the speed and direction of wind, and a particularly intense West African monsoon season, which produces waves that can lead to powerful and long-lasting hurricanes.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 WA horse population grows too large?</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/benton-city-woman-rehabilitates-orphaned-horses-as-states-population-grows-too-large">https://www.q13fox.com/news/benton-city-woman-rehabilitates-orphaned-horses-as-states-population-grows-too-large</a>
GIST	<p><b>BENTON CITY, Wash.</b> - An Eastern Washington woman is rescuing orphaned horses out of the kindness of her heart. Her selfless actions are shedding light on a bigger issue about a growing wild horse population in the state, and also the looming effects of inflation on current horse owners.</p> <p>A passion for horses has become a calling for Suzanne Thomas. She has dedicated her life to giving young foals like Ginger their chance at life.</p> <p>"I do this because I couldn't say no, I couldn't turn my back on them," said Thomas.</p> <p>She rehabilitates wild orphaned horses rescued from reservations like Yakima, Colville and White Swan. Thomas nurses the foals back to health at her Sugar Shack Horses rescue in Benton City. Most of the foals arrive to Thomas malnourished, injured and clinging to life. It's her delicate care that gives them a fighting chance at survival.</p> <p>"These guys, they have a future. Even though they're orphans right now, and it's sad, and they come in here and they're sad. By the time they leave, they're happy babies and healthy babies," said Thomas.</p> <p>She started rescuing wild orphaned horses in March 2022. So far, Thomas has had about 30 babies looking to her for motherly comfort in their time of healing.</p> <p>The foals have been separated from their family of wild horses in Central and Eastern Washington, where officials said the wild horse population is growing too large. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) controls the population of wild horses on state land through sterilization injections. However, reservations don't have the resources to operate that process. So, they resort to questionable methods to round up the horses themselves. This often ends with foals falling behind their mothers – injured and lost from the herd.</p> <p>"Worst part of the babies getting gathered up is sometimes when they get caught, they're roped and hog-tied, and they can be left hog-tied for a significant amount of time until they get back to a trailer," said Thomas.</p> <p>The horses that do get round up are either sold at an auction or sent to a feed lot for possible slaughter. For some orphans, they're purchased by horse traders who contact people like Thomas to rehabilitate them. She makes sure they have veterinary checkups and are fed regularly. Only thing is Thomas doesn't get paid for her work.</p> <p>"I go in and pick them up, and it's on an I.O.U. He sets the prices, they come here and get the love and care that they need. And then when they get a home, he gets his money," said Thomas, referring to her partnership with a horse trader.</p> <p>Though earning money would support her efforts, Thomas said it's not why she does this kind of rescue. She said she has the time to put into this labor of love, helping helpless animals have a new start. Much of what Thomas does at her rescue relies on donations. That money helps fund milk, blankets, feeding bins and other tools needed for the work. <a href="#">Sugar Shack Horses</a> is accepting donations to support the cause. The rescue can be reached by phone at 509-528-2471 or email at <a href="mailto:sugarshackhorses@gmail.com">sugarshackhorses@gmail.com</a>.</p> <p>In reference to the overall management of wild herds on federal lands, the BLM is looking to invest millions of dollars more into its fertility control programs under its 2022 budget. In the meantime, Senator</p>

Diane Feinstein of California has called on federal land managers to conduct an investigation to determine how many of the wild horses captured on public lands in the U.S. west end up at slaughterhouses.

In situations like this, Thomas said she has to keep her emotions in check for the sake of the young horses. She said it's always infuriating when foals who were previously owned are surrendered to her rescue sick and skinny. She worries foals in similar conditions could be a sign of the times, just like what she saw during the 2008 recession. With prices of hay increasing by 100 percent due to inflation, Thomas said she anticipates more people will neglect their horses because they can't afford to care for them.

"You're going to see a mass amount of horses getting dumped in the wild. And domesticated horses, they don't do well in the wild. They don't go and join the herd. They get beat up and torn apart by the stallions," said Thomas.

That's why she'll take any orphan she has space for—to protect them and raise them to be good horses at their new forever homes. Almost all the foals she has cared for have been adopted.

"It's rewarding work. And I love updated pictures of the ones that come through here. They're doing great and thriving. It's just awesome. And to know they're not going to end up in a slaughter, it's all worth it," said Thomas.

She also understands not every foal can be saved, including one owner-surrendered horse she spent hours caring for—even sleeping in the same stable with it. As hard as they tried, Thomas said the veterinarian declared it was septic and had low brain function, due to him and his mother suffering starvation at the hands of the previous owner.

"I know a lot of it has to do with the economy, prices for hay raised, people can't afford them. If you can't afford them, then call a rescue or sell them, or do what's right by the horse before you let it starve to death, because not only did mom starve to death last night, but the baby as well," said Thomas as she shed tears.

There are other orphans out there in need of a new beginning. It's what fuels Thomas to fulfill her calling.

"Little babies like this is what makes me do it," said Thomas. "I'm always hopeful. I will never give up, I just won't."

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HEADLINE	05/30 FBI keeps rules handbook hidden: DIOG
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/30/fbi-keeps-rulebook-agents-hidden-public-view/">https://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2022/may/30/fbi-keeps-rulebook-agents-hidden-public-view/</a>
GIST	<p>The FBI has a rulebook restricting its agents' actions but it does not want the American people to know what it says.</p> <p>The several-hundred-page Domestic Investigations and Operations Guide (DIOG) used by agents today is a hidden handbook intended to standardize policy for criminal, national security and foreign intelligence investigations.</p> <p>After an internal audit first reported by The Washington Times showed agents' rule-breaking at a rate sparking senators to ask for a federal investigation, The Times asked for a copy of the rulebook and was denied. The bureau instead pointed to an outdated version of the rulebook that is available online.</p> <p>"The DIOG is updated as needed to reflect changes in policy and the 2016 version currently posted on the FBI Vault is not the most recent version, but reflects the latest version that is publicly available," the FBI said in a statement. "We are not able to share an updated version with you at this time."</p> <p>The rulebook has undergone multiple revisions since then. According to a 2019 FBI audit, a newer version of the rulebook was released in July 2018 and later updated in June 2019.</p>

The 2019 audit found a ratio of slightly more than two “compliance errors” per sensitive investigative matter (SIM) reviewed, which are investigations involving people engaged in politics, government, the media or religious expression. Agents violated rules for those investigations at least 747 times in 18 months ending June 30, 2019, according to the audit.

Mike German, a Brennan Center fellow who formerly worked as an undercover agent, believes the bureau’s rules should be made public. Based on his experience before leaving the bureau in 2004, Mr. German said a lack of transparency from the FBI sometimes does more to prevent Americans’ complaints than to protect sources and methods used in investigations.

“Americans have the right to know how the FBI interprets the rules given to it by the attorney general, by the Congress, and by the president,” Mr. German said. “We have a right to know what this very powerful government agency thinks the rules are.”

People who are skeptical of the FBI’s conduct say avoiding Congressional scrutiny factored into the birth of the rules that have evolved since the Church Committee’s investigations in the 1970s that dug into problems at the FBI.

The first version of investigative guidelines for the FBI from the attorney general came in 1976, and Cato Institute senior fellow Patrick Eddington said the Justice Department’s action took the wind out of the sails for Congress to establish boundaries for the FBI.

Mr. Eddington uncovered the FBI’s internal auditing in litigation against the bureau for access to government records and he believes it is time for Congress to mount a ‘Church Committee 2.0.’

“People that work in government bureaucracies, at the end of the day, are always looking to expand their empire,” Mr. Eddington said. “They’re always looking to expand their budgets, they’re always looking to expand their authorities, and the bureau is no different in that respect; [it] may be the most infamous of federal agencies in that respect.”

The terrorist attacks on September 11, 2001, yielded another expansion of federal investigative authorities. Mr. German said he witnessed it firsthand.

His undercover work led him to function as a resource for colleagues unfamiliar with related matters and he recalled another agent explaining how his boss instructed him to do something that leapfrogged necessary steps.

Additional expansions of investigatory authority occurred near the end of President George W. Bush’s administration and during the first term of President Barack Obama, according to Mr. German, who authored the 2019 book “Disrupt, Discredit, and Divide: How the New FBI Damages Democracy.”

These expansions developed the bureau’s practice of using assessments, which are examinations that do not require a warrant. Under assessments, FBI personnel may conduct surveillance without a court order and may utilize human sources or access other information without an accusation of criminal wrongdoing.

Mr. German expressed concern about the prevalence of federal agents creating plots for themselves to foil, which he said would have drawn greater scrutiny during his tenure.

A recent example involving this activity led to the acquittal of charges against two men accused of involvement in a plot to kidnap Michigan Gov. Gretchen Whitmer in 2020. Prosecutors used evidence from undercover agents and an informant, but defense lawyers portrayed FBI agents as tricking the accused men into a sinister plan.

Mr. German said the FBI has sometimes focused too much on the ideology of groups attracting accused criminals rather than searching for the violent criminals themselves. He said his undercover work taught him violent criminals “weren’t really very attentive in the sessions where ideology was discussed.”

	<p>Reading the FBI's rules may help people understand the factors contributing to the bureau's use of investigatory power against Americans accused of no crime and may help explain federal agents' creating plots for themselves to solve.</p> <p>"I think we should know the rules to the broadest extent possible and doing so would empower our democracy by giving people some control in having a voice about where they thought these were broader than necessary," Mr. German said. "And [it] would give our elected representatives the opportunity to challenge particular determinations and particular claims of authority."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Seattle's wettest May since 1948</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/this-may-is-the-second-wettest-seattle-month-on-record/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/weather/this-may-is-the-second-wettest-seattle-month-on-record/</a>
GIST	<p>If you or someone you know has been unusually stressed about the fate of your tomato seedlings this month, it's not without cause.</p> <p>This May has been one of the coldest and wettest on record in the Seattle area. As of this morning, this May is now the wettest we've seen since Truman was president.</p> <p>So far this month we've been deluged with 3.84 inches of rain, surpassing May 1977 for the second-wettest Seattle month on record. Seattle has also seen unusually low temperatures for May, with an average temperature of 52.4 degrees this month.</p> <p>The cause, according to National Weather Service meteorologist Jeff Michalski, has to do with the La Niña weather pattern over the Pacific Ocean. La Niña's colder-than-usual water temperatures near the equator affect weather circulation across the globe — and it also means colder and wetter weather here in the Pacific Northwest.</p> <p>This is usually something that would happen in winter, "but we're still seeing it lingering into the spring," Michalski said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/29 Nasty La Nina keeps popping up</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/weathers-unwanted-guest-nasty-la-nina-keeps-popping-up/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/science/weathers-unwanted-guest-nasty-la-nina-keeps-popping-up/</a>
GIST	<p>Something weird is up with La Nina, the natural but potent weather event linked to more drought and wildfires in the western United States and more Atlantic hurricanes. It's becoming the nation's unwanted weather guest and meteorologists said the West's megadrought won't go away until La Nina does.</p> <p>The current double-dip La Nina set a record for strength last month and is forecast to likely be around for a rare but not quite unprecedented third straight winter. And it's not just this one. Scientists are noticing that in the past 25 years the world seems to be getting more La Ninas than it used to and that is just the opposite of what their best computer model simulations say should be happening with human-caused climate change.</p> <p>"They (La Ninas) don't know when to leave," said Michelle L'Heureux, head of the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration forecast office for La Nina and its more famous flip side, El Nino.</p> <p>An Associated Press statistical analysis of winter La Ninas show that they used to happen about 28% of the time from 1950 to 1999, but in the past 25 winters, they've been brewing nearly half the time. There's a small chance that this effect could be random, but if the La Nina sticks around this winter, as forecast, that would push the trend over the statistically significant line, which is key in science, said</p>

L'Heureux. Her own analysis shows that La Nina-like conditions are occurring more often in the last 40 years. Other new studies are showing similar patterns.

What's bothering many scientists is that their go-to climate simulation models that tend to get conditions right over the rest of the globe predict more El Ninos, not La Ninas, and that's causing contention in the climate community about what to believe, according to Columbia University climate scientist Richard Seager and MIT hurricane scientist Kerry Emanuel.

What Seager and other scientists said is happening is that the eastern equatorial Atlantic is not warming as fast as the western equatorial Atlantic or even the rest of the world with climate change. And it's not the amount of warming that matters but the difference between the west and east. The more the difference, the more likely a La Nina, the less the difference, the more likely an El Nino. Scientists speculate it could be related to another natural cycle, called the Pacific Decadal Oscillation, or it could be caused by human-caused climate change or both.

"At this point we just don't know," L'Heureux said. "Scientists are watching and I know, are actively studying. But it's really important because of regional conditions. We need to get this right."

La Nina is a natural and cyclical cooling of parts of the equatorial Pacific that changes weather patterns worldwide, as opposed to El Nino's warming. Often leading to more Atlantic hurricanes, less rain and more wildfires in the West and agricultural losses in the middle of the country, studies have shown La Nina is more expensive to the United States than the El Nino. Together El Nino, La Nina and the neutral condition are called ENSO, which stands for El Nino Southern Oscillation, and they have one of the largest natural effects on climate, at times augmenting and other times dampening the big effects of human-caused climate change from the burning of coal, oil and gas, scientists said.

"They really have a very, very strong" effect, said research scientist Azhar Ehsan, who heads Columbia University's El Nino/La Nina forecasting. "So a third consecutive La Nina is not at all a welcome thing."

He said the dangerous heat in India and Pakistan this month and in April is connected to La Nina.

The current La Nina formed in the late summer of 2020 when the Atlantic set a record for the number of named storms. It strengthened in the winter when the West's drought worsened and in the early summer of 2021 it weakened enough that NOAA said conditions were neutral. But that pause only lasted a few months and by early fall 2021 La Nina was back, making it a double dip.

Normally second years of La Nina tend to be weaker, but in April this La Nina surprised meteorologists by setting a record for intensity in April, which is based on sea surface temperatures, Ehsan said.

"These are very impressive values for April," L'Heureux said. Still, because La Ninas historically weaken over summer and there are slight signs that this one may be easing a bit, there's the small but increasing chance that this La Nina could warm just enough to be considered neutral in late summer.

La Nina has its biggest effect in the winter and that's when it is a problem for the West because it's the rainy season that is supposed to recharge areas reservoirs. But the West is in a 22-year megadrought, about the same time period of increasing La Nina frequency.

Three factors — ENSO, climate change and randomness — are biggest when it comes to the drought, which is itself a huge trigger for massive wildfires, said UCLA climate scientist Daniel Swain. Without climate change, La Nina and bad luck could have made the drought the worst in 300 years but with climate change it's the worst in at least 1,200 years, said UCLA climate hydrologist Park Williams.

La Nina "is a pretty important player; it may be the dominant player," said Swain, who has a blog on Western weather. "It could be responsible for one-third, maybe one-half of the given conditions if it is pronounced enough."

“It’s much less likely that the Southwest will see at least even a partial recovery from the megadrought during La Nina,” Swain said.

La Nina “amps up your Atlantic storms” but decreases them in the Pacific, said Colorado State University hurricane researcher Phil Klotzbach.

It’s all about winds 6 to 7 miles (10 to 12 kilometers) above the water surface. One of the key factors in storm development is whether there is wind shear, which are changes in wind from high to low elevations. Wind shear can decapitate or tip over hurricanes, making them hard to strengthen and at times even stick around. Wind shear can also let dry air into hurricanes that chokes them.

When there’s an El Nino, there’s lots of Atlantic wind shear and it’s hard for hurricanes to get going. But La Nina means little wind shear in the Atlantic, making it easier for storms to intensify and do it quickly, said University of Albany hurricane researcher Kristen Corbosiero.

“That’s a really huge factor,” Corbosiero said.

“Whatever is the cause, the increasing incidence of La Ninas may be behind the increasing hurricanes,” MIT’s Emanuel said.

Some areas like eastern Australia and the arid Sahel region of Africa do better with more rain during La Nina. India and Pakistan, even though they get extra spring heat, also receive more needed rain in La Ninas, Columbia’s Ehsan said.

A 1999 economic study found that drought from La Nina cost the United States agriculture between \$2.2 billion to \$6.5 billion, which is far more than the \$1.5 billion cost of El Nino. A neutral ENSO is best for agriculture.

Columbia’s Seager said even though there may be some chance and some natural cycles behind the changes in La Nina, because there’s likely a climate change factor he thinks there will probably be more of them.

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HEADLINE	05/28 Monkeypox outbreak ‘just peak of iceberg’?
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/monkeypox-outbreak-could-be-just-the-peak-of-the-iceberg-who-warns">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/monkeypox-outbreak-could-be-just-the-peak-of-the-iceberg-who-warns</a>
GIST	<p>The World <a href="#">Health</a> Organization has warned that 200 monkeypox cases found in recent weeks outside countries where the virus usually circulates could be just the beginning.</p> <p>“We don’t know if we are just seeing the peak of the iceberg [or] if there are many more cases that are undetected in communities,” Sylvie Briand, WHO’s epidemic and pandemic preparedness and prevention chief, acknowledged on Friday in a briefing to countries.</p> <p>Since the UK first reported a confirmed monkeypox case on 7 May, nearly 200 cases have been reported to the UN health agency in countries far from the states where the virus is endemic.</p> <p>The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control has put the number of such cases at 219.</p> <p>Endemic in a number of west and central African nations, monkeypox cases have suddenly been detected in more than 20 other countries around the world, including the US, Australia, the United Arab Emirates and nearly a dozen EU countries.</p> <p>The Spanish health ministry said on Friday that 98 cases had been confirmed there so far, while the UK currently counts 90 verified infections.</p>



Portugal has meanwhile registered 74 confirmed cases, health authorities said on Friday, adding that all the occurrences are in men, mainly aged below 40.

Argentina confirmed the first two cases of monkeypox in Latin America on Friday.

“We are still at the very, very beginning of this event,” Briand told member state representatives attending the World Health Assembly in Geneva. “We know that we will have more cases in the coming days,” she said, but stressed there was no need to panic.

“This is not a disease the general public should be worried about. It is not Covid or other diseases that spread fast.”

Monkeypox is related to smallpox, a deadly disease that was eradicated in 1980. But monkeypox is much less severe, with a fatality ratio of 3-6%. Most people recover within three to four weeks.

The initial symptoms include a high fever, swollen lymph nodes and chickenpox-like rash.

There is not much in the way of treatment, but some antivirals developed against smallpox exist, including one that was recently approved by the European Medicines Agency against smallpox, Briand pointed out.

Vaccines developed for smallpox have also been found to be about 85% effective in preventing monkeypox.

However, since smallpox has not posed a threat in more than four decades, [most people under the age of 45 have not received the vaccine](#), and the supplies of the jabs are today very limited.

Briand said experts were trying to determine what had spurred this “unusual situation”, saying preliminary investigations did not seem to indicate that the virus that causes monkeypox had changed or mutated.

She voiced hope that the spread could be halted. “We have a good window of opportunity to stop the transmission now,” she said. “If we put in place the right measures now, we probably can contain this easily.”

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HEADLINE	05/28 Russia-linked superyachts ‘going dark’
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/revealed-russia-linked-superyachts-going-dark-to-avoid-tracking-systems">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/28/revealed-russia-linked-superyachts-going-dark-to-avoid-tracking-systems</a>
GIST	<p>In the sparkling azure waters of Antigua, the gleaming £95m superyacht Alfa Nero could be seen at anchor last week by sightseers enjoying the <a href="#">Caribbean</a> coastline. But few of the tourists who spotted its sleek black hull would have appreciated that it was quite a find.</p> <p>Since the invasion of <a href="#">Ukraine</a>, the superyacht, which is linked to the Russian billionaire Andrey Guryev, has vanished off the global tracking maps used to locate marine traffic.</p> <p>An investigation by the <i>Observer</i> this weekend reveals it is one of at least six superyachts linked to UK-sanctioned oligarchs which have “gone dark” on ocean tracking systems. The owners of these yachts will almost certainly realise they are at risk of being targeted in a global hunt for the assets of Russia’s super-rich.</p> <p>At least 13 such vessels with a total value of nearly £2bn have already been impounded since the invasion of Ukraine, from southern France to Fiji. In the latter case, the superyacht Amadea, allegedly linked to the gold billionaire Suleiman Kerimov, was seized on behalf of the <a href="#">US</a>.</p>

Analysts report an increase in Russian-linked yachts which are turning off the automatic identification system (AIS) equipment used for tracking large vessels. The system can be turned off for legitimate reasons, but experts believe some vessels want to avoid detection.

An analysis by the *Observer* of AIS data compiled by the maritime and aviation market intelligence firm VesselsValue reveals other superyachts which have “gone dark” for more than a month include:

- The 72-metre (238ft) superyacht Clio, linked to industrialist Oleg Deripaska, which sailed from the Indian Ocean to Turkey after the invasion. Its last transmitted location was on 18 April in the Black Sea, within range of the Russian ports of Sochi and Novorossiysk.
- The 70-metre Galactica Super Nova, linked to the oligarch Vagit Alekperov, the sanctioned former president of Lukoil. The last transmitted location of the vessel was on 2 March off the Croatian coast.
- The 140-metre Ocean Victory, linked to the sanctioned oligarch Viktor Rashnikov, which last transmitted its location at anchor in the Maldives on 1 March.

One member of crew on a superyacht linked to a Russian oligarch sanctioned by the UK told the *Observer* last week: “We were told to turn off the AIS. We removed the screws on the power plug and pulled it out.”

There are about 9,300 superyachts on the seas, worth more than £50bn, according to industry data. An estimated 10% of that fleet is owned by Russians.

One of the first superyachts to be impounded was the 86-metre Amore Vero, linked to the oil tycoon [Igor Sechin](#), which was seized by customs officers at a shipyard at La Ciotat, near Marseille, on 2 March.

Italian authorities also [impounded the 143-metre Sailing Yacht A on 12 March](#) in Trieste. It is believed to be owned by the billionaire entrepreneur Andrey Melnichenko. He was sanctioned by the UK on 15 March.

Melnichenko’s other superyacht, the futuristic £240m Motor Yacht A, has disappeared from global tracking system. Its last confirmed location was on 10 March in the Maldives.

The last recorded location of the Alfa Nero on AIS was in the Caribbean on 3 March, when it was anchored at Philipsburg in Sint Maarten. The yacht is operating on a skeleton crew and has put its tender, the Alfa Fish, into storage.

Guryev, 62, a Russian who made his fortune with the Russian fertiliser giant PhosAgro, is reported by maritime sources to be the owner of the vessel. He was revealed to have bought London’s largest private residence, the 25-bedroom mansion Witanhurst, for £50m in 2008.

He has regularly enjoyed sailing on the Alfa Nero. The vessel is also used by his family, including his son (also Andrey) and his son’s wife, Valeria, who studied at the London College of Fashion and once reportedly stated on Instagram that she was “too pretty for work”. Like many yachts, it is owned via an opaque offshore structure, and Guryev has denied being the owner.

Other yachts which have not been tracked by AIS for more than a month include the Galactica Super Nova, which has a glass-bottomed swimming pool with a waterfall. It left Tivat in Montenegro on 2 March and promptly disappeared off the system.

The Clio, linked to Deripaska, sailed more than 3,000 miles after the invasion, from the Maldives, through the Suez Canal, across the Mediterranean and into the Bosphorus, gateway to the Black Sea and its Russian ports. In the Clio’s case, one reason it may have gone dark could be the perilous situation in the Black Sea arising from the war.

Other yachts which have not transmitted a confirmed location via AIS for at least a month include the My Sky, linked to the cigarette tycoon Igor Kesaev, which last reported its location in the Maldives on 30

March. The Maldives has no extradition treaty with the US, and at least five yachts linked to Russian owners have headed for its waters since the invasion. Other vessels, including two owned by Roman Abramovich, have headed to Turkey.

Under maritime rules, AIS should always be in operation when ships are under way or at anchor. All vessels of 300 gross tonnage and upwards must be fitted with it. A cruising vessel will typically transmit its location frequently, but it can turn the system off when in port. The data is relayed by radio receivers and satellites.

Sam Tucker at VesselsValue said: "There are some vessels where we would be previously getting a signal every few minutes from transponders and we are now seeing gaps of months. It's very likely that some have flicked off the switch and gone into stealth mode."

None of the sanctioned oligarchs linked to the six superyachts suspected of turning off their AIS responded to a request for comment.

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## Crime, Criminals

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HEADLINE	05/30 After Uvalde, 'copycat' arrests nationwide
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.newsmax.com/us/uvalde-texas-maryland-colorado/2022/05/30/id/1072187/">https://www.newsmax.com/us/uvalde-texas-maryland-colorado/2022/05/30/id/1072187/</a>
GIST	<p>The May 24 deadly shooting of 19 children and two teachers at the Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, has led to several "copycat" arrests around the nation, including a 10-year-old Florida fifth grader.</p> <p>"This student's behavior is sickening, especially after the recent tragedy in Uvalde, Texas," Lee County Florida Sheriff Carmine Marceno said <a href="#">in a May 28 Facebook post</a> after deputies arrested a 10-year-old at Patriot Elementary School in Cape Coral. "Making sure our children are safe is paramount. We will have law and order in our schools! My team didn't hesitate one second...NOT ONE SECOND, to investigate this threat."</p> <p>The department's Facebook post included a link of a deputy taking the child, identified as Daniel Issac Marquez, 10, out of the Lee County Sheriff's Office in handcuffs.</p> <p>Marquez is charged with making a written threat to conduct a mass shooting after detectives learned he sent a text message, which was later determined to be "fake," police said.</p> <p>"Right now is not the time to act like a little delinquent. It's not funny," Marceno said in the release. "This child made a fake threat, and now he's experiencing real consequences."</p> <p>Marquez is one of several young people investigated or arrested for making "copycat" threats to schools around the country in the wake of the Uvalde shootings where an 18-year-old gunman entered the school around 11:30 a.m. May 24 and killed 19 students and two teachers while injuring 17 others before being killed himself by a Customs and Border Protection agent, according to <a href="#">The New York Times</a>.</p> <p>Several school districts in Texas received threats in the days following the shooting, <a href="#">the Dallas Observer reported May 27</a>, including Richardson Independent School District, Fort Worth ISD, Weatherford ISD, Arlington ISD, Rains ISD, and the Donna ISD.</p> <p>The publication said any of the threats that might have been credible were "thwarted."</p> <p><a href="#">The Washington Post reported May 27</a> that Suffolk County, New York, police said they arrested a 16-year-old for posting a threat for a mass shooting at Belford High School, and police in Prince George's</p>

	<p>County, Maryland, told the Post a high school there went "into lockdown" when a high school student allegedly brought "ghost gun parts" into a classroom.</p> <p>Two students were arrested in Denver, Colorado, for bringing a paintball gun into a high school that went into lockdown, <a href="#">PBS reported May 29</a>.</p> <p>"In the aftermath of a school shooting tragedy, school shootings are front of mind for everyone, and we may be more inclined to report suspected threats of violence, thus increasing the number of threats," James Densley, professor of criminal justice at Metropolitan State University and a co-founder of the Violence Project, wrote in an email to the Post. "At the same time, high school students try to seize on the moment by calling in hoax threats to get school canceled."</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Arrest: Fla. man threatens school shooting</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/deputies-arrest-florida-man-who-threatened-a-school-shooting/2022/05/30/2cc8e57e-e028-11ec-ae64-6b23e5155b62_story.html">https://www.washingtonpost.com/national/deputies-arrest-florida-man-who-threatened-a-school-shooting/2022/05/30/2cc8e57e-e028-11ec-ae64-6b23e5155b62_story.html</a>
GIST	<p>TAMPA, Fla. — Detectives have arrested an 18-year-old Florida man after receiving a tip that he threatened a mass shooting at a school in a social media post.</p> <p>Corey Anderson’s post showed him with a handgun, a rifle and a tactical-style vest along with a caption that said, “Hey Siri, directions to the nearest school,” Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister said in a news release.</p> <p>Anderson was arrested at his home near Tampa on Sunday, and charged with a written or electronic threat to conduct a mass shooting or act of terrorism.</p> <p>“This type of threat is unacceptable. This man intentionally instilled fear into our community as a sick joke, but be warned, this is no laughing matter,” Hillsborough County Sheriff Chad Chronister said in a <a href="#">statement</a>.</p> <p>The sheriff said his agency will “do everything within our power” to track down anyone who makes school threats.</p> <p>“Protecting our students is our greatest priority,” Chronister said. We take school threats very seriously, if you see something suspicious, please contact us immediately.”</p> <p>The arrest came days after an 18-year-old entered an <a href="#">elementary school in Uvalde, Texas</a>, and fatally shot 19 children and two teachers. The gunman was eventually killed by law enforcement officers some 80 minutes after he entered the classroom in the predominantly Latino community that sits among vegetable fields halfway between San Antonio and the U.S.-Mexico border.</p> <p>In the Florida case, deputies discovered that the weapons in the photo were airsoft guns, the news release said.</p> <p>Anderson was booked into jail and later released on bond, jail records show.</p> <p>Records did not include the name of an attorney who could speak on Anderson’s behalf.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Guilty: militia leader pointed rifle at police</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/jury-convicts-militia-leader-of-pointing-rifle-at-police/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/nation/jury-convicts-militia-leader-of-pointing-rifle-at-police/</a>
GIST	<p>LOUISVILLE, Ky. (AP) — The leader of a pro-gun group that has staged armed protests has been convicted of pointing a rifle at law enforcement while in Kentucky for a demonstration, officials said.</p>

A federal jury found John F. Johnson, who goes by “Grandmaster Jay,” guilty on Friday on charges of assaulting, resisting or impeding law enforcement and brandishing a firearm during racial justice protests two years ago, the U.S. Attorney’s Office said Sunday in a statement.

Court documents and evidence presented during the weeklong trial said Johnson pointed an AR-15 platform rifle and tactical flashlight at two federally deputized officers on a roof in downtown Louisville, the statement said. The alleged incident occurred the day before the Kentucky Derby, when hundreds of protesters peacefully marched to demand justice in the fatal shooting of Breonna Taylor by Louisville police.

Johnson’s group, known as the NFAC, has an all-Black membership and often demonstrates against white supremacy and police violence.

Johnson, 59, of Ohio faces at least seven years in prison when he is sentenced on Aug. 22, the statement said.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Report: Canada military sexual misconduct</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/canada-military-sexual-misconduct.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/30/canada-military-sexual-misconduct.html</a>
GIST	<p>OTTAWA — Several of Canada’s top military officers have been accused of sexual harassment, and the former top commander pleaded guilty this year to criminal charges related to accusations that he committed sexual misconduct when leading the nation’s armed forces.</p> <p>About a quarter of the women serving in the Canadian military said they had been sexually assaulted during their military careers, according to a government census. And the government has set aside nearly \$800 million to settle class action lawsuits by current and former military members involving sexual misconduct.</p> <p>The cascade of sexual abuse scandals has shaken confidence in the military in Canada, where on Monday the government released an independent review by a former Supreme Court justice aimed at addressing what critics say is a pervasive and systemic problem that has persisted despite past promises of reform.</p> <p>It will be the fourth report to focus on sexual abuse in Canada’s military, where victims say that abuse permeates all levels of the forces and that they are frequently punished for speaking out.</p> <p>The extent of the problem was laid out in a <a href="#">scathing 2015 report</a>, which found that Canada’s military had “an underlying sexualized culture” that was hostile to women and lesbian, gay, transgender, bisexual and queer members.</p> <p>In the report to be released on Monday, Louise Arbour, a former Canadian Supreme Court justice who was also the United Nations’ high commissioner for human rights, and who conducted the review, found that attempts to reform the military following the earlier report had failed.</p> <p>The military, she wrote, “was not ready to fully embrace the paradigm shift required to produce these changes.”</p> <p>She added: “They now need to adapt to a new reality — the women warriors are here to stay. And they will stay on their terms, seeking the substantive equality to which they are entitled. Women should no longer feel like guests.”</p> <p>Aside from its widespread nature, perhaps the most striking aspect of sexual abuse in Canada’s military is how it reaches into the highest levels.</p>

Seven years ago, Jonathan Vance, shortly after taking over as the military's top commander, unveiled a sweeping program to deal with chronic sexual assault and harassment and pledged to tackle an issue he called "a threat to this institution."

But not long after retiring, he became ensnared in such a scandal himself. Kellie Brennan, a former army major, said in an interview with Global News, a Canadian broadcaster, that she had a sexual relationship with Mr. Vance over several years, including when she was under his command.

Ms. Brennan later testified before a parliamentary committee that Mr. Vance had fathered two of her children.

In April, Mr. Vance, who had led troops in Canada's last major combat mission, in Afghanistan, [pleaded guilty](#) to obstruction of justice after being accused of trying to persuade Ms. Brennan to lie to investigators.

It didn't end there.

Not long after he succeeded Mr. Vance as the military's top leader, [Adm. Art McDonald was suspended](#) last year after the military police opened an investigation into unspecified accusations. The military did not reveal the results of the inquiry, but he was not reappointed to lead the military and he retired.

Several other senior officers also face accusations or are under investigation, including Vice Adm. Haydn Edmundson, who, as the head of human resources, was among those responsible for eliminating sexual misconduct in the military. He was charged last December with sexual assault and committing indecent acts. The case will be heard in a civilian criminal court, and Mr. Edmundson has denied wrongdoing.

Phillip Millar, a former infantry officer and lawyer who has represented both victims and officers accused of sexual harassment and assault, said he had long been frustrated by the military's tendency to treat cases as isolated examples of wrongdoing.

Mr. Millar filed lawsuits on behalf of seven victims who accused a former petty officer of using his position as a medic to sexually assault women at recruiting centers. In three separate criminal trials, the man was convicted on 12 charges of sexual assault and 25 charges of breach of trust.

"What I want to know is what happened to the person who is in charge of him and who received the first or second complaint?" Mr. Millar said. "Why wasn't that person fired?"

The lack of an institutional approach to the problem has bred mistrust among many Canadians, said Stéfanie von Hlatky, a professor of political studies at Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario.

"This crisis has truly moved the needle on how Canadians perceive the military," Professor von Hlatky said. "There's a sense of urgency that they need to restore trust, not just because they're recovering from a crisis but because they have huge objectives when it comes to recruitment and retention."

Ms. Arbour's review, which runs over 400 pages, lays out 48 recommendations, including the hiring of an external monitor to oversee their implementation and make regular public reports on the military's progress.

The recommendations include turning over [sexual assaults to the civilian criminal justice system](#) for investigation and prosecution, something the government has already decided to do, and to consider providing undergraduate education to officer recruits through the regular university system rather than the elite military college in Kingston, Ontario and a junior military college St. Jean, Quebec.



	<p>“The military colleges appear as institutions from a different era, with an outdated and problematic leadership model,” Ms. Arbour wrote. “The advantages of Canada’s considerable investment in military colleges are unclear.”</p> <p>Other proposals include systems to review and increase the number of women and nonwhite men who are promoted and turning recruitment over to civilians to “increase the competence level of the recruiters.” She also suggests a number of options for ensuring that misconduct is tracked and considered in personnel evaluations.</p> <p>Anita Anand, who was named defense minister late last year by Prime Minister Justin Trudeau with a mandate to promote a top-to-bottom overhaul, told a news conference that she accepted all of Ms. Arbour’s recommendations.</p> <p>“Apologies are most meaningful when they are coupled with action,” Ms. Anand, a former law professor, said. “Meaningful change will rest on the political determination of the civilians who oversee the Canadian Armed Forces.”</p> <p>One key to successfully changing the military, said Maya Eichler, an associate professor of political and Canadian studies and women’s studies at Mount Saint Vincent University in Halifax, will be a transformation of the military’s concept of the ideal soldier.</p> <p>“It’s always been a heterosexual man, a white man, everything in the military is based on that idea,” she said. “We’ve assumed that women can come into that system, that L.G.B.T.Q. folks can come in, along with racialized members, and they just have to all adapt to that norm of who a soldier is. That doesn’t work, because the responsibility has been put on all these individuals to change, but the institution hasn’t changed.”</p> <p>Though past reports on the military and sexual abuse have done little to change the situation, Professor von Hlatky said she was optimistic that Monday’s review will lead to concrete changes.</p> <p>Several recent changes may make it difficult to ignore the report, including new appointments to the military’s top command and the selection of Ms. Anand as defense minister</p> <p>“I’m hopeful for change but, at the same time, is it possible to completely eradicate sexual misconduct in an organization?” Professor von Hlatky said. “The expectation of perfect conduct in an organization is probably not realistic.”</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Citizen brigade to stop trailhead break-ins</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/bellingham-man-forms-citizens-brigade-stop-trail-break-ins/YYZSE556KFESHE5IRAJ6OPNP24/">https://www.kiro7.com/news/local/bellingham-man-forms-citizens-brigade-stop-trail-break-ins/YYZSE556KFESHE5IRAJ6OPNP24/</a>
GIST	<p>BELLINGHAM, Wash. — Fed up with trailhead break-ins, a Bellingham man started a citizen’s brigade that monitors parking lots. They can’t arrest anyone, but the hope is that their presence will prevent these petty crimes from happening.</p> <p>Steve Avila founded the Whatcom County-based watchdog group. Avila says that participants donate an hour of their time each week to patrolling vulnerable lots.</p> <p>“The Parks Department let me know the biggest ones getting hit,” said Avila. “There was a dozen cars getting hit in one day at one of our major trailheads.”</p> <p>According to Avila, paths off scenic Chuckanut Drive have experienced the most problems.</p> <p>Two weeks ago, hiker Jim Thomsen travelled from Kingston to Bellingham with that very warning in mind. Thomsen tells us a friend had posted on Facebook just days before his trip that they fell victim to a</p>



	<p>smash-and-grab while visiting Teddy Bear Cove in Chuckanut Bay. Thomsen thought that by taking the less-frequented Y Street trail, he'd be safe. Sadly, he was wrong.</p> <p>"It was a sparsely populated trail, which is part of the appeal," said Thomsen. "Probably part of the appeal for prowlers as well."</p> <p>The way Avila sees it, there's not much you can do to prevent your car from being a target.</p> <p>"There's people that have taken everything out of their cars and they still got broken in," said Avila. "It's almost become a production run for these guys, they pop the windows, grab what they can and leave."</p> <p>Thomsen is grateful nothing was taken from inside his car, but it'll be expensive to fix that broken window. He says his insurance premium won't cover the damage.</p> <p>"My fiancée and I are getting married in August," said Thomsen. "We defiantly have much better uses for a thousand dollars than give it to Geico."</p> <p>While this incident happened in Whatcom County, the problem is statewide. Amanda McCarthy, with Washington State Parks and Recreation, says there has been a notable increase in trailhead smash-and-grabs.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Rise in trailhead thefts expected in summer</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/uptick-trailhead-thefts-expected-this-summer/281-17c3293a-11b3-415d-8ca4-01b657a87fa0">https://www.king5.com/article/news/crime/uptick-trailhead-thefts-expected-this-summer/281-17c3293a-11b3-415d-8ca4-01b657a87fa0</a>
GIST	<p>ISSAQUAH, Wash. — Packed trailhead parking lots are expected to be a target for thieves this summer, and they're not just looking for valuables left in the vehicle.</p> <p>Washington State Patrol has already seen an uptick in smash-and-grabs throughout Western Washington trailheads this year. The organization expects to see an additional increase during summer, when more people are leaving their cars unattended at trailheads for several hours.</p> <p>On Friday, May 20, the lot across from the popular Poo Poo Point trailhead in Issaquah was targeted.</p> <p>Tricia, one of the victims, thinks the thief broke into six cars. She said they didn't take any of her belongings, but she believes the thief was looking for her registration, an address and possibly a garage door opener. Thieves use personal information to locate a person's home and break in.</p> <p>She posted a photo of her car onto a local hiking Facebook group to warn others.</p> <p>"That was a surprise. It's kind of brazen to just break into cars," said Mike Bjorkegren, who hiked Poo Poo Point on Monday.</p> <p>Bjorkegren saw Tricia's Facebook post and decided to take extra precautions.</p> <p>"We took out things from our glove box like the registration and we took photos of that a put them on our phone so if we needed them they're there, but not in the car," said Bjorkegren.</p> <p>WSP said it is working with other law enforcement to increase patrols at trailheads.</p> <p>The Washington State Parks and Recreation Commission shared the following tips to keep hikers safe from trailhead car prowls:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Park in well-lit areas</li> <li>• Do not leave any valuables in your car</li> <li>• Make sure doors and trunk are locked</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Report any signs of worrisome behavior</li> <li>• Be aware of your surroundings</li> <li>• Store your registration in your trunk or lock box that is attached to your vehicle</li> <li>• Create a safety circle when you go on a hike (tell someone where you'll be and how long you anticipate to be gone)</li> </ul>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/30 Seattle weekend: 10 gun-related incidents</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-arrested-in-capitol-hill-after-2-hour-chase/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/law-justice/man-arrested-in-capitol-hill-after-2-hour-chase/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>A man was arrested late Sunday after shooting at police during a nearly two-hour chase through the Capitol Hill neighborhood, according to the Seattle Police Department. This was one of 10 individual gun-related incidents over the weekend that city police are investigating.</p> <p>The department said a 58-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of attempted homicide after people called reporting a man in a trench coat and bucket hat lurking near houses, and an alarm call from a residence, all around Volunteer Park.</p> <p>According to a news release from Seattle police, a man matching the description was recorded breaking a window with a rock on private security footage.</p> <p>The man had left the scene before police arrived, but was later found in a dark sedan, police said. When officers attempted to stop the car, the driver fired two shots at the police vehicle, according to the department release.</p> <p>No one was injured.</p> <p>Officers chased the man for nearly two hours, before arresting him after “a brief negotiation” to get the suspect to comply with commands, according to a department spokesperson.</p> <p>Police have not yet found a firearm and encourage community members to call 911 if it is found but to avoid touching the weapon. Residents can also report property damage from the chase to the Seattle Police Department.</p> <p>Police said this was one of 10 investigations underway involving someone who fired a gun on Saturday or Sunday.</p> <p>The first took place around 1:20 a.m. Saturday, when people heard multiple shots fired near 12th Avenue South and South Main Street. Witnesses told police someone had been shot in a parking lot, but arriving officers did not find any victims.</p> <p>They did notice damage to a car and recovered a phone, wallet, gun-mounted light and shell casings. Then about two hours later, a person matching the identification found in the wallet was taken to Harborview Medical Center with two gunshot wounds, police said.</p> <p>Next, several people reported hearing gunshots in the 6900 block of Southwest Delridge Way at about 4:21 a.m., the department said. Arriving officers did not find any victims or notice property damage, but did find multiple shell casings.</p> <p>On Sunday at about 1:37 a.m., witnesses reported to police that two groups were shooting at each other in a parking lot in the 1000 block of Harbor Avenue Southwest, the department said.</p> <p>Both parties fled, according to witnesses, before police arrived. Police collected shell casings and documented damage to a parked car.</p> <p>Just three minutes later, police responded to an armed carjacking in the 1200 block of Northeast 95th Street.</p>

A man approached four 17-year-olds standing near a car in a parking lot and demanded that the two of them hand over their phones, wallet and keys, police said. The suspect reportedly fired a shot in the air then hit one of the girls in the head with the gun and left in the vehicle, according to police.

A few minutes later, police responded to a report of shots fired during a vehicle pursuit near Rainier Avenue South and 23rd Avenue South, the department said. The suspect had stolen a phone at a Capitol Hill nightclub and the owner confronted the suspect who then drove away, police said.

The phone owner also got into a car with her friends and followed the suspect, who fired a shot at them from the passenger window, police said. As officers filled out a report the suspect drove by, but pursuing officers were not able to catch up.

Nearly an hour later at 2:50 a.m., police responded to a shooting in the 4200 block of South Othello Street, the department said. Two victims said another driver pulled up next to them, then got out and began shooting. One person was hit in the shoulder. The victims tried to drive away but ran into a curb and then got out and ran, while the suspect fled as well, police said.

At around the same time, multiple people reported hearing shots fired and a driver speeding away in the 6700 block of Martin Luther King Junior Way South, police said. Officers found no victims or property damage, but did find shell casings.

Several hours later, residents in the 8800 block of Ninth Avenue Southwest reported hearing several gun shots, the department said. Witnesses told police that a man was chasing another man through the backyards in the area, but officers were not able to find either one.

Just before midnight, police responded to an encampment in the 600 block of 12th Avenue South after someone was reportedly shot, the department said.

A witness told police two individuals went into his tent and shot his tentmate, who left before police arrived, the department said. Police were not able to locate the victim, but retrieved shell casings and documented the blood in the tent.

Police said there is currently no evidence indicating any of these incidents are related. The investigation remains ongoing.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Memorial Day weekend: 11 mass shootings</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/30/mass-shootings-memorial-day-weekend-taft-chattanooga-uvalde/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/30/mass-shootings-memorial-day-weekend-taft-chattanooga-uvalde/</a>
GIST	<p>After a shooting at an elementary school in Uvalde, Tex., that claimed the lives of 19 children and two teachers last week, many politicians, public figures and gun-control advocates <a href="#">said the U.S. government should ensure mass shootings</a> could not happen again.</p> <p>But mass shootings have already happened again — and again. At least 14 mass shootings have taken place across the United States since Tuesday, from California to Arizona to Tennessee.</p> <p>This Memorial Day weekend alone — spanning Saturday, Sunday and the federal holiday on Monday — there have been at least 11 mass shootings.</p> <p>These incidents, gleaned from local news reports and police statements, meet the threshold for mass shootings as defined by <a href="#">the Gun Violence Archive</a>, a nonprofit research organization.</p> <p>GVA <a href="#">defines</a> a mass shooting as one in which “four or more people are shot or killed, not including the shooter.” Several of those shootings occurred at parties, and one at a Memorial Day event.</p>

At least seven people have been killed and 49 injured in the mass shootings over the holiday weekend, according to GVA and local news sources. Since the Uvalde shooting last Tuesday, at least 10 people have been killed and 61 injured in mass shootings.

Brian Stelter, chief media correspondent and news anchor at CNN, interrupted a broadcast Sunday about the response to the [mass shooting in Uvalde](#) to tell viewers about another — in Tennessee.

“Mass killings like Buffalo and Uvalde become national news, but many mass shootings do not. They just end up being local stories,” Stelter said, in a [clip](#) that has been viewed over 334,000 times on Twitter.

On Saturday evening, six teenagers were injured by gunfire in Chattanooga, Tenn., in what Mayor Tim Kelly [said](#) was probably “an altercation between other teenagers.”

The victims, who were between the ages of 13 and 15, were transported to a hospital, and two had life-threatening injuries, according to the Chattanooga Police Department.

Kelly said he was “heartbroken” for the families of the victims and “angry” about political inaction on gun laws during a news conference following the shooting.

The Chattanooga shooting was one of at least five mass shootings that took place on Saturday alone, according to GVA.

On Sunday, there were at least another five mass shootings, including one at a [Memorial Day festival in Taft, Okla.](#)

Authorities [said](#) one person was killed and seven people were injured, including a minor. The Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation said a suspect turned himself in and was in custody.

Meanwhile, one person died and three others were injured during a shooting at a party in Merced County, Calif., the sheriff’s office said. One victim was still in “critical condition” Sunday afternoon.

The latest apparent mass shooting occurred in the early hours of Monday in Port Richmond, Pa. Two people died and two others were injured during a shooting at a party, according to preliminary [statements from law enforcement](#). The victims ranged in age from 14 to 21, and police told FOX 29 Philadelphia they found 47 shell casings at the scene.

The incident was not listed in the GVA database as of early Monday, but appears to meet the standards for a mass shooting.

It was the city’s “2nd DOUBLE HOMICIDE scene in two hours,” according to Steve Keeley, a reporter for FOX 29 Philadelphia, after a father and his 9-year-old son were shot inside their car in Philadelphia on Sunday evening, law enforcement said.

The grim litany of mass shootings began even before the official start of the holiday weekend, when police in Anniston, Ala., said gunfire erupted after a graduation party attended by more than 150 young adults and teenagers as young as 14. Six people were injured by gunfire.

And on Friday afternoon in Michigan, officers in Mecosta County found three children under the age of 10 and a woman dead of apparent gunshot wounds when they responded to a report of a man with a gun and shots fired at a private residence. They also found a man with a gunshot wound to the head, who was taken to a hospital. Relatives told a local news outlet that the children were siblings and were 3, 4 and 6 years old, and that the woman was their mother.

	In the aftermath of the Uvalde shooting, many local leaders and community representatives issued emotional pleas for action. As The Washington Post has reported, it is <a href="#">unlikely that Congress</a> will be able to pass gun-control measures.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Fewer drivers stopping for law enforcement</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/wa-police-say-fewer-drivers-are-stopping-for-them/">https://www.seattletimes.com/seattle-news/wa-police-say-fewer-drivers-are-stopping-for-them/</a>
GIST	<p>OLYMPIA — The Washington State Patrol says drivers are increasingly refusing to stop for troopers, and other law enforcement agencies also say this is becoming a common occurrence.</p> <p>The Northwest News Network reports that from Jan. 1 to May 17, the agency logged 934 failure-to-yield incidents. While the patrol didn't track this in the past, veteran troopers say there's been a dramatic uptick in drivers fleeing traffic stops.</p> <p>"Something's changed. People are not stopping right now," said Sgt. Darren Wright, a WSP spokesperson with 31 years on the job. "It's happening three to five times a shift on some nights and then a couple times a week on day shift."</p> <p>Local police departments are also seeing this behavior. The Puyallup Police Department logged 148 instances of drivers fleeing from officers from July 26 to May 18.</p> <p>Asked if that represents a significant increase, Chief Scott Engle wrote in an email, "I could 1,000,000% say this is completely absolutely emphatically totally unusual."</p> <p>In Lakewood, another small city in Pierce County, Chief Mike Zaro said drivers are refusing to stop for his officers on average once a day.</p> <p>"A lot of times they're stolen cars; sometimes we don't know what the deal is," Zaro said.</p> <p>Steve Strachan, the executive director of the Washington Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, and others in law enforcement connect the increase in failures to yield to passage last year of House Bill 1054, a sweeping police tactics law that, among other things, barred high-speed pursuits except in very limited circumstances.</p> <p>The law was part of a package of police reforms majority Democrats passed in response to the murder by police of George Floyd in Minneapolis and other high-profile police killings — reforms aimed at addressing racial disproportionality in policing.</p> <p>Minority Republicans in the Legislature criticized many of the changes, including the pursuit law, and said they jeopardized public safety.</p> <p>Strachan said he doesn't dispute the need for statewide rules governing police pursuits, but thinks the new law went too far.</p> <p>Under the new law, police officers can't give chase unless there's reasonable suspicion to believe the driver is impaired or the higher standard of probable cause to believe they're an escaped felon or have committed a violent crime or a sex crime.</p> <p>Even then there are restrictions on when officers can pursue. Officers must balance whether the person poses an "imminent threat" and whether the safety risks of the person getting away outweigh the danger of engaging in a high-speed chase.</p> <p>This year both the Washington House and Senate passed a bill with bipartisan votes that would have amended the new pursuit law in response to concerns from police that it was too restrictive. But a final version of the measure died in the state Senate. Advocates for police reform opposed the change.</p>

	<p>“Why is it we are so concerned about hot pursuits?” asked Martina Morris with the group Next Steps Washington at a February rally at the Capitol. “Because they are dangerous. They are the No. 2 cause of deaths during encounters with police.”</p> <p>The prime sponsor of House Bill 1054, Democratic state Rep. Jesse Johnson, also opposed lowering the threshold for pursuits.</p> <p>“I just do not believe pursuits in a 21st century policing system are needed,” Johnson said in a March interview on TVW’s “Inside Olympia” program.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/31 Asia seized 1B meth pills last year</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/31/asia/asia-meth-crime-synthetic-drugs-hnk-intl/index.html">https://www.cnn.com/2022/05/31/asia/asia-meth-crime-synthetic-drugs-hnk-intl/index.html</a>
GIST	<p>(CNN)More than one billion methamphetamine pills were seized in East and Southeast Asia last year, a record figure that the United Nations says highlights a "staggering" increase in the regional synthetic drug trade.</p> <p>Meth production and trafficking is surging in countries in the Lower Mekong region -- Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, Thailand and Myanmar -- according to a new report by the UN Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) released on 30 May.</p> <p>And that is enabling <a href="#">Asia's drug cartels</a> to flood markets with billions of dollars worth of synthetic narcotics even as the global economy continues to struggle with the Covid-19 pandemic.</p> <p>"The scale and reach of the methamphetamine and synthetic drug trade in East and Southeast Asia is staggering and yet it can continue to expand if the region does not change approach and address the root causes that have allowed it to get to this point," said Jeremy Douglas, UNODC's regional representative for Southeast Asia.</p> <p>Organized crime groups have taken advantage of recent political instability, such as a military coup in Myanmar, that has left some border regions largely lawless and easy to exploit, Douglas said, while falling prices have been popular with consumers.</p> <p>"The continued drop in prices of crystal methamphetamine in Southeast Asia, for instance in Malaysia and Thailand, while purity of the drug remains high, means greater affordability and accessibility of high-purity drugs," Douglas said.</p> <p>"Organized crime [syndicates] have all the ingredients in place that they need to continue to grow the business, including territory to produce, access to chemicals, established trafficking routes and relationships to move product, and a massive population with spending power to target," Douglas said.</p> <p>"They look at the region and see potential and profits."</p> <p><b>Drugs boom in a strict region</b></p> <p>In Southeast Asia, a region with a population of more than 680 million people across 11 countries, methamphetamine is a booming multibillion-dollar trade that has supplanted opium and its derivative heroin to become the dominant illegal drug for both use and export.</p> <p>That is despite the region being notorious for having some of the world's strictest drug laws, with some offenses punishable by death in Singapore, Indonesia and Vietnam.</p> <p>One of Asia's biggest-ever drug busts took place in Laos last October, when local police seized more than 55.6 million methamphetamine pills in a single raid.</p> <p>Cambodia is also home to an increasing number of drug production sites, the UN agency noted.</p>



	"One clandestine laboratory dismantled there last year was an industrial-scale facility set up to produce ketamine and potentially other drugs," it said.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Las Vegas biker gangs shooting injures 7</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/wounded-vegas-biker-gangs-freeway-shooting-police-85074855">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/wounded-vegas-biker-gangs-freeway-shooting-police-85074855</a>
GIST	<p>HENDERSON, Nev. -- Rival motorcycle gangs were involved in a metro Las Vegas freeway shooting over the weekend that injured seven people and authorities arrested three suspects, police said Monday.</p> <p>Sunday's shooting on the freeway involved people associated with the Hells Angels and the Vagos gangs, police in the Las Vegas suburb of Henderson said in a statement.</p> <p>Officers found "multiple subjects who had sustained gunshot wounds" and six people were taken to a hospital, the statement said. A seventh injured person arrived at a hospital was confirmed to be involved in the shooting, the statement said.</p> <p>It was not clear whether all the injured people suffered gunshot wounds.</p> <p>Three men were arrested on suspicion on charges of attempted murder with a deadly weapon and other crimes, police said.</p> <p>Police identified the suspects as Richard Devries, 66; Stephen Alo, 46, and Russell Smith, 26. Court records did not indicate whether they had lawyers who could speak on their behalf.</p> <p>"As this is an open investigation, no further details will be released at this time," the statement said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Phoenix party shooting kills 1, injures 5</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/cops-gunfire-phoenix-house-party-kills-injures-85071247">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/cops-gunfire-phoenix-house-party-kills-injures-85071247</a>
GIST	<p>PHOENIX -- Gunfire erupted at a weekend house <a href="#">party</a> in Phoenix, killing one young man and injuring five teens, police said.</p> <p>Phoenix police said Monday that they are trying to determine what led up to the shooting overnight Saturday into Sunday. Neighbors told KNXV-TV that they heard multiple gunshots before several vehicles drove away from the scene.</p> <p>Police said the gunfire killed an 18-year-old man and five other people ranging in age from 16 to 18 were wounded.</p> <p>No identities were released and a police statement provided no details about the injuries of the people who were wounded.</p> <p>There was no information provided about a suspect or suspects but investigators were appealing for information from the public.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 SPD arrest prowler shooting at officers</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-police-arrest-man-after-shooting-at-officers-prowling-homes-in-capitol-hill">https://www.q13fox.com/news/seattle-police-arrest-man-after-shooting-at-officers-prowling-homes-in-capitol-hill</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - Police arrested a 58-year-old man after he shot at officers and led them on a nearly two-hour search in a north <a href="#">Capitol Hill neighborhood</a> Sunday night.</p> <p>According to the <a href="#">Seattle</a> Police Department (SPD), officers first learned of the suspect after a series of 911 calls coming in about a car prowler near Volunteer park. At around 7:40 p.m., someone called 911</p>



	<p>reporting a man in a trench coat and a bucket hat peering in the windows of a neighbors house. Before officers arrived, the caller told authorities the suspect had left in a black dodge sedan.</p> <p>About an hour later, another 911 caller from the west end of the park reported a man matching the same description in her backyard.</p> <p>Ten minutes later, police received an alarm call from a residence in the same block. The homeowners' security system captured video of a man matching the suspect description walking around the house before breaking a window with a rock. Once again, the suspect left before officers arrived.</p> <p>A little after 10:00 p.m., officers spotted the black Dodge sedan near 14th Ave. E and E Mercer Street. Authorities say the car was driving in the center of the road with its hazard lights flashing. Right when the officers were about to stop the car, the driver pulled out a gun and fired two shots at them from the driver's side window. Neither of the officers were hit.</p> <p>According to <a href="#">SPD</a>, multiple police units flooded the area to search for the suspect. Officers then found the car near 15th Ave E and E Prospect St., and saw the suspect get out and run between two houses. Police contained the area and began searching for suspect, who continued to run and hide on several properties. Just before midnight, officers tracked him down and took him into custody after a brief negotiation.</p> <p>Officers recovered shell casings at the scene of the shooting on 14th Ave. E and E Mercer St., and K9 teams searched for a firearm in the neighborhood where the suspect hid.</p> <p>The 58-year-old suspect has been booked in the <a href="#">King County</a> Jail for two counts of attempted homicide and one count of attempted burglary.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Protester smears cake on Mona Lisa</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/mona-lisa-smeared-cake-suspected-climate-protester">https://www.theguardian.com/world/2022/may/30/mona-lisa-smeared-cake-suspected-climate-protester</a>
GIST	<p>The Mona Lisa has been left shaken but unharmed after a visitor to the Louvre tried to smash the glass protecting the world's most famous painting before smearing a cake across its surface in an apparent climate-related publicity stunt.</p> <p>The perpetrator was a man disguised as an elderly woman who jumped out of a wheelchair before attacking the glass on Sunday.</p> <p>"Maybe this is just nuts to me ... " posted the author of a video of the incident's aftermath that shows a Louvre worker cleaning the glass. "[He] then proceeds to smear cake on the glass, and throws roses everywhere before being tackled by security."</p> <p>The Louvre was not immediately available for comment.</p> <p>Another video posted on social media showed the same member of staff finishing cleaning the pane while another attendant removes a wheelchair from in front of the Leonardo da Vinci masterpiece.</p> <p>"Think of the Earth, people are destroying the Earth," the man, dressed in a wig, said in French in another video that showed him being led away from the Paris gallery with the wheelchair, indicating the incident probably had an environmentalist motive.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/30 Germany: rise child sex abuse, depictions</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/germany-reports-rise-of-child-sex-abuse-depiction-of-abuse/">https://www.seattletimes.com/nation-world/world/germany-reports-rise-of-child-sex-abuse-depiction-of-abuse/</a>

GIST	<p>BERLIN (AP) — German police recorded a significant increase of depictions of sexual abuse against children last year compared to the year before, the country’s top criminal police official said Monday.</p> <p>More than 39,000 cases — or an increase of 108.8% — came to the attention of authorities last year, according to a special analysis of police crime statistics presented to reporters in Berlin. Those cases include the distribution, acquisition, possession and production of depictions of sexual violence against children and teenagers.</p> <p>According to the report, known cases of child sexual abuse rose by 6.3% last year to more than 15,500. The annual figures only cover the fraction of cases that police are aware of — the real figures are expected to be much higher, said Holger Muench, the head of Germany’s Federal Criminal Police Office.</p> <p>Authorities estimate that one to two students per each school class in Germany are affected by sexual violence.</p> <p>Muench also said that more people are reporting suspicions of child abuse than in the past.</p> <p>“We very much welcome this: serious acts of violence against children and young people, as the weakest members of society, must be particularly outlawed, prosecuted and brought to an end,” he said.</p> <p>Germany’s Independent Commissioner on Child Sexual Abuse, Kerstin Claus, pointed out that Europe has become a hub for the dissemination of abuse images.</p> <p>“We need increased European cooperation and significantly more investment in the human and technological resources of the investigating authorities,” she demanded. “Every investigative success is important because it offers the chance to stop acute child abuse and prevent further acts.”</p> <p>Later Monday, police and prosecutors in Cologne presented new findings about a suspected sexual child abuse case.</p> <p>Cologne Police President Falk Schnabel told reporters that a 44-year-old German man from Wermelskirchen near Cologne was arrested on suspicion of several cases of severe child abuse and possession of huge amounts of child abuse depictions on both video and photos.</p> <p>“I am truly shocked and stunned,” Schnabel said. “I have not yet encountered such a level of inhuman brutality and callous indifference to the suffering of young children in pain with their cries and obvious fear.”</p> <p>The married man, whose name wasn’t given in line with German privacy rule, offered his services as a babysitter online. He abused babies as young as a month old and teenagers up to 14 years old. The amount of data — from 1993 to the present — found on his computer is so big that investigators have only been able to scour about 10% of the abuse depictions even though the suspect was already detained in December.</p> <p>In addition to the child pornography, authorities also found a list on the man’s computer of more than 70 suspects who shared or possessed child abuse material with the main suspect. These suspects are now also being investigated, Schnabel said.</p>
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HEADLINE	05/29 Downtown Chattanooga shooting; 6 injured
SOURCE	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-people-shoot-tennessee-police/story?id=85048571">https://abcnews.go.com/US/multiple-people-shoot-tennessee-police/story?id=85048571</a>
GIST	Six teenagers were shot and wounded, two critically, Saturday night when multiple people <a href="#">opened fire</a> in downtown Chattanooga, Tennessee, during a confrontation between two large groups of young people, authorities said.

Chattanooga police officers were patrolling the downtown area at about 10:58 p.m. local time when they heard the gunshots and immediately responded to help those who were injured, Chattanooga Police Chief Celeste Murphy said during a news conference on Sunday.

"The officers observed multiple parties fire and then they observed multiple victims who had been hit by the gunfire," Murphy said.

She said the officers immediately began rendering aid to the wounded and helping other juveniles get out of harm's way.

Murphy said all six victims who were struck by gunfire were teenagers. She said four of the victims suffered non-life-threatening injuries and two remain "very, very critical."

The chief said no arrests have been made.

She said one person was detained as a person of interest but has since been ruled out as a suspect.

Murphy said investigators are combing through security video to try and identify suspects and determine what motivated the violence.

"They've been able to determine two groups were beginning to converge on one another in what appears to have been some type of altercation," Murphy said.

She said two armed individuals from one group started firing upon the other group. She said only one of the people in the group being fired on was the intended target and "all the other victims that were shot were unintended" targets.

"At this time it does not seem to be any connection to anything gang-related. That's not been officially ruled out, but there's nothing indicating that at this time," Murphy said.

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HEADLINE	05/29 DOJ to review shooting response in Uvalde
SOURCE	<a href="https://apnews.com/article/texas-school-shooting-justice-department-reviewing-response-ed6ea4160d723c2a25cde1c909d31fa7">https://apnews.com/article/texas-school-shooting-justice-department-reviewing-response-ed6ea4160d723c2a25cde1c909d31fa7</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Texas (AP) — The Justice Department said Sunday it will review the <a href="#">law enforcement response</a> to the Texas school shooting, an unusual federal look back prompted by questions about <a href="#">the shifting and at times contradictory information</a> from authorities that have enraged a community in shock and sorrow.</p> <p>Department spokesman Anthony Coley said the review would be conducted in a fair, impartial and independent manner and the findings would be made public. The announcement came as <a href="#">President Joe Biden was visiting Uvalde</a>, where he and first lady Jill Biden paid their respects at a memorial to the 19 students and two teachers killed at Robb Elementary School on Tuesday.</p> <p>The goal of the review, which the mayor requested, is “to provide an independent account of law enforcement actions and response that day, and to identify lessons learned and best practices to help first responders prepare for and respond to active shooter events,” Coley said in a statement.</p> <p>Handling the review is the department’s Office of Community Oriented Policing Services. It was not immediately clear how the review would be conducted, whether law enforcement officials could be compelled to cooperate in the review and when it might be completed.</p> <p>Such a review is somewhat rare and most after-action reports that come after a mass shooting are generally compiled by local law enforcement agencies or outside groups. The Justice Department conducted similar reviews after 14 people were killed in a terrorist attack in San Bernardino, California, in 2015, and after</p>

	<p>the mass shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, Florida, the deadliest attack on the LGBTQ community in U.S. history that left 49 people dead and 53 people wounded.</p> <p>The frustration, anger and questions about the response from police grew deeper on Friday after authorities revealed that despite repeated 911 calls from students and teachers, the school district's police chief had told more than a dozen officers to wait in a school hallway. Officials said he believed the suspect was barricaded inside adjoining classrooms and that there was no longer an active attack.</p> <p>The revelation caused more grief and raised new questions about whether more lives were lost because officers did not act faster to stop the gunman, who was ultimately killed by Border Patrol tactical officers.</p> <p>Biden has not spoken publicly about the police response to the shooting.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/29 Oklahoma festival shooting: 1 killed, 7 hurt</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/agency-dead-injured-oklahoma-festival-shooting-85052816">https://abcnews.go.com/US/wireStory/agency-dead-injured-oklahoma-festival-shooting-85052816</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>TAFT, Okla. -- Authorities said one person was killed and seven were injured in a shooting early Sunday at an outdoor festival in eastern Oklahoma, with a witness describing frantic people running for cover as the gunfire erupted.</p> <p>Two juveniles were among those shot at the Memorial Day event near Taft, about 10 miles (16 kilometers) southeast of Tulsa, the Oklahoma State Bureau of Investigation said in a statement.</p> <p>Witnesses said an argument preceded the gunfire just after midnight, the agency said. No one has been arrested, it said.</p> <p>"We heard a lot of shots and we thought it was firecrackers at first," said Sylvia Wilson, an owner of Taft's Boots Cafe, which was open at the time to serve a surge of visitors to the small town for the Memorial Day weekend gathering. "Then people start running and ducking. And we were yelling at everyone ... 'Get down! Get down!'" Wilson said to The Associated Press by telephone from the café on Sunday morning.</p> <p>About 1,500 people attended the event in Taft, which usually has a population of just a few hundred people. Members of the Muskogee County Sheriff's Office were in attendance and immediately began rendering aid, OSBI said.</p> <p>The agency provided no other details including the conditions of those injured. The Muskogee County Sheriff's Office referred the AP to OSBI for more information. A bureau spokeswoman has not responded to the AP's calls.</p> <p>Wilson estimated her café is about 100 feet (30 meters) from where the shooting broke out. She said law enforcement had been on the scene to help with security earlier and that officers reacted quickly to the shooting.</p> <p>"We are upset," Wilson said, adding: "Everything is getting back to normal. ... The danger has past."</p> <p>Wilson wondered if a Memorial Day parade planned for Monday in Taft could be cancelled because of the shooting, although she said she hadn't received official word.</p>
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<b>HEADLINE</b>	<b>05/29 False shooter reports led stampede injuries</b>
<b>SOURCE</b>	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/29/barclays-center-stampede-boxing-naomi-osaka/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/29/barclays-center-stampede-boxing-naomi-osaka/</a>
<b>GIST</b>	<p>Several people were injured after false reports of an active shooter sent crowds scrambling after a boxing match at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn attended by celebrities such as Madonna and tennis star Naomi Osaka, authorities said.</p>

A spokesman for the New York Police Department told The Washington Post that a “loud disturbance” after the world lightweight championship match caused people to start running just after midnight on Sunday, and that early reports swirling on social media of shots fired were “incorrect.”

Ten people suffered minor injuries in the crowd surge and were transported to hospitals for treatment, Detective Adam Navarro said.

Osaka wrote on Twitter early Sunday that she was inside the Barclays Center when she “heard shouting and saw people running,” before being told “that there was an active shooter and we had to huddle in a room and close the doors.” Osaka said she was “petrified.”

The panic revealed a nation on edge after 19 [elementary school children and two adults in Uvalde, Tex.](#), and [10 people at a Buffalo supermarket](#) were killed in separate mass shootings just days apart this month, illustrating the [bleak recurrence of such incidents](#) in the United States.

Navarro said the NYPD investigated and dismissed reports of an active shooter at the scene. “Once we looked into it, we found it was a bunch of nothing,” he told The Post.

Some people took to social media to call for gun-control measures, appearing to draw a link to the Texas school shooting last week.

“We’re used to brawls at boxing events but recent headlines and the panic of the crowd made many of us worried that our worst fears would come true,” Ryan Songalia, a boxing reporter for the Ring, [told](#) the New York Post.

One social media user, who had earlier posted a video of the match from inside the Barclays Center, [wrote that he and his father](#) “had to run and hide against the walls” when a stampede broke out. “I watched a guy get trampled nearly out cold,” that person tweeted. “I am beyond done.”

The Twitter user could not immediately be reached for comment.

Photos and videos posted on social media appear to show that the match was over and that many spectators had already left when people began to scream and run back inside the arena early Sunday. In the aftermath, shoes and trash were seen strewn on the ground. When contacted for comment, the Barclays Center directed The Washington Post to the NYPD.

Madonna was among the nearly 19,000 spectators at the sold-out Barclays Center who watched undefeated lightweight champion Gervonta Davis, of Baltimore, retain his World Boxing Association title with a [sixth-round technical knockout](#) of Rolando Romero. It was not immediately clear whether she was present during the subsequent mayhem.

Mike Coppinger, a reporter for ESPN, [tweeted](#) earlier in the night that a Barclays Center security supervisor told the outlet there was “a person with a gun” outside the arena.

Stefan Bondy, a sports reporter for the New York Daily News, [tweeted](#) that he was inside Barclays Center. At the end of the fight, “as everybody was clearing out, there were reports of gunshots,” he wrote. “I didn’t hear them but security guard said report on radio was it occurred on concourse. Crazy stampede of people followed. Scary scene.”

The NYPD had a different account. “There was some kind of sound disturbance where people became a little afraid — some ran toward the Barclays Center, some ran away from it,” Navarro said. “People are banging into each other, so you had 10 individuals — no children — who had minor injuries and went to area hospitals at approximately 1 o’clock outside the location.”

Osaka, soon wrote, “I really hope everyone made it out safely, since I’m tweeting this we made it out ok.”

	Another shooting was reported overnight Sunday in Chattanooga, Tenn., where local news outlets, citing police, <a href="#">said</a> several people were shot and one person detained.
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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Before massacre online threats to teen girls</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/05/28/uvalde-texas-gunman-online-threats/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/technology/2022/05/28/uvalde-texas-gunman-online-threats/</a>
GIST	<p>He could be cryptic, demeaning and scary, sending angry messages and photos of guns. If they didn't respond how he wanted, he sometimes threatened to rape or kidnap them — then laughed it off as some big joke.</p> <p>But the girls and young women who talked with <a href="#">Salvador Ramos</a> online in the months before he <a href="#">killed 19 children</a> in an elementary school in Uvalde, Tex., rarely reported him. His threats seemed too vague, several said in interviews with The Washington Post. One teen who reported Ramos on the social app Yubo said nothing happened as a result.</p> <p>Some also suspected this was just how teen boys talked on the Internet these days — a blend of rage and misogyny so predictable they could barely tell each one apart. One girl, discussing moments when he had been creepy and threatening, said that was just “how online is.”</p> <p>In the aftermath of the <a href="#">deadliest school shooting in a decade</a>, many have asked what more could have been done — how an 18-year-old who spewed so much hate to so many on the Web could do so without provoking punishment or raising alarm.</p> <p>But these threats hadn't been discovered by parents, friends or teachers. They'd been seen by strangers, many of whom had never met him and had found him only through the social messaging and video apps that form the bedrock of modern teen life.</p> <p>The Washington Post reviewed videos, posts and text messages sent by Ramos and spoke with four young people who'd talked with him online, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for fear of further harassment.</p> <p>The girls who spoke with The Post lived around the world but met Ramos on Yubo, <a href="#">an app that mixes live-streaming and social networking</a> and has become known as a “Tinder for teens.” The Yubo app has been downloaded more than 18 million times in the U.S., including more than 200,000 times last month, according to estimates from the analytics firm Sensor Tower.</p> <p>On Yubo, people can gather in big real-time chatrooms, known as panels, to talk, type messages and share videos — the digital equivalent of a real-world hangout. Ramos, they said, struck up side conversations with them and followed them onto other platforms, including Instagram, where he could send direct messages whenever he wanted.</p> <p>But over time they saw a darker side, as he posted images of dead cats, texted them strange messages and joked about sexual assault, they said. In a video from a live Yubo chatroom that listeners had recorded and was reviewed by The Post, Ramos could be heard saying, “Everyone in this world deserves to get raped.”</p> <p>A 16-year-old boy in Austin who said he saw Ramos frequently in Yubo panels, told The Post that Ramos frequently made aggressive, sexual comments to young women on the app and sent him a death threat during one panel in January.</p> <p>“I witnessed him harass girls and threaten them with sexual assault, like rape and kidnapping,” said the teen. “It was not like a single occurrence. It was frequent.”</p>



He and his friends reported Ramos's account to Yubo for bullying and other infractions dozens of times. He never heard back, he said, and the account remained active.

Yubo spokeswoman Amy Williams would not say whether the company received reports of abuse related to Ramos's account. "As there is an ongoing and active investigation and because this information concerns a specific individual's data, we are not legally able to share these details publicly at this time," she said in an email. Williams would not say what law prevents the company from commenting.

Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R) [said](#) Wednesday that Ramos had also written, "I'm going to shoot my grandmother" and "I'm going to shoot an elementary school" shortly before the attack in messages on Facebook. And Texas Department of Public Safety officials said Friday that Ramos had discussed buying a gun several times in private chats on Instagram.

Ten days before the shooting, he wrote in one of the messages, "10 more days," according to the official. Another person wrote to him, "Are you going to shoot up a school or something?" to which Ramos responded, "No, stop asking dumb questions. You'll see," the official said.

Andy Stone, a spokesman for Meta, which owns Facebook, Instagram and the chat service WhatsApp, referred The Post to an earlier statement from the company that said the messages were sent privately.

The rise of services that connect strangers through private messaging has strained the conventional "see something, say something" mantra repeated in the decades since the Columbine High School massacre and other attacks, according to social media researchers. And when strangers do suspect something is wrong, they may feel they have limited ways to respond beyond filing a user report into a corporate abyss.

Many of Ramos' threats to assault women, the young women added, barely stood out from the undercurrent of sexism that pervades the Internet — something they said they have fought back against but also come to accept.

A [2021 Pew Research Center study](#) found these experiences are common for young people, with about two-thirds of adults under 30 reporting that they've experienced online harassment. Thirty-three percent of women under 35 say they have been sexually harassed online.

Danielle K. Citron, a law professor at University of Virginia, said women and girls often [don't report threats](#) of rape to law enforcement or trusted adults because they have been socialized to feel they do not deserve safety and privacy online. Sometimes, they don't think anyone would help them.

Women and girls have "internalized the view, 'What else do we expect?'" said Citron, the author of the upcoming book "The Fight for Privacy: Protecting Dignity, Identity, and Love in the Digital Age." "Our safety and intimate privacy is something that society doesn't value."

Ramos' hatred toward women and obsession with violence were clear in the messages viewed and interviews conducted by The Post, but his identity was mostly hidden. The teens who spoke with The Post said they saw him on live videos he did on Yubo, then they exchanged Instagram user names to message with him.

And he'd constrained his comments to private messaging services like Yubo and Instagram, leaving only the recipients with the burden to react.

Like many of the people he spoke with, Ramos had shared little about himself online. He used screen names like "salv8dor\_" and "TheBiggestOpp" — and shared only his first name and his age. His profile pictures were selfies, him holding up his shirt or looking dour in front of a broken mirror.



He shared animal videos, struck up flirtatious conversations and shared intimate things about his past that left some feeling like distant friends. But in recent months, he'd also started posting darker imagery — moody black-and-white photos and pictures of rifles on his bed.

His threats were often hazy or unspecific, and therefore easily dismissed as just a troll or bad joke. One girl told The Post she first saw Ramos in a Yubo panel telling someone, "Shut up before I shoot you," but figured it was harmless because "kids joke around like that."

In the week before the shooting, Ramos began to hint that something was going to happen on Tuesday to at least three girls, she said. "I'll tell you before 11. It's our little secret," she said he told them multiple times. On the morning of the shooting, he messaged her a photo of two rifles. She responded to ask why he'd sent them, but he never wrote back, according to a screenshot viewed by The Post.

"He would threaten everyone," she said. "He would talk about shooting up schools but no one believed him, no one would think he would do it."

Another 16-year-old said she met Ramos on Yubo in February and that he messaged her asking for her Instagram account. Earlier this month, he reacted to a meme she'd posted that referenced a weapon with a laughing emoji and said, "personally I wouldn't use a AK-47" but "a better gun": an AR-15-style rifle like the one police have said he used in the shooting, according to a screenshot viewed by The Post.

The Uvalde shooting comes less than two weeks after another gunman killed 10 Black people in a Buffalo grocery store. He [live-streamed the attack](#) through the video service Twitch, which removed the stream within a few minutes; copies of it remain online.

The alleged gunman, Payton Gendron, also used the chat platform Discord as a place to save his online writing and pre-attack to-do lists. On the day of the attack, he invited people to his private room, and the 15 who accepted were then able to scroll back through months of his racist screeds and see another view of his attack live-stream. Discord [has said](#) the messages were visible only to the suspect until he shared them the day of the attack.

The revelations about the Uvalde gunman's social media activity follow years of complaints from activists and high-profile figures about Instagram's ability to combat its most troubling users. Instagram has [said](#) that tackling abusive messages is harder than in comments on public pages, and that it doesn't use its artificial intelligence technology to proactively detect content like hate speech or bullying in the same way.

Instagram users can report direct messages that violate the company's rules against hate speech, bullying and calls to incite violence, and they can block offensive users. But many abusive messages still slip through the cracks. The [Center for Countering Digital Hate](#), an advocacy group, [said](#) last month it had analyzed more than 8,000 direct messages sent to five high-profile women and found that Instagram had failed to act on 90 percent of the abusive messages, despite the posts having been reported.

Facebook's critics have alleged that the ability to tackle dangerous posts could get harder once the company follows suit on its plan to expand end-to-end encryption, which scrambles the contents of a message so that only the sender and receiver can see it, as a default setting on all of its messaging services. Currently, encryption is the default setting on WhatsApp but users only have the option of encrypting their messages on Instagram and Facebook. But the company has [argued](#) that as more people flock to private messaging it wants to ensure social media networks are "privacy focused."

In recent years, Instagram has launched new tools to protect teens from predatory users, particularly adults attempting to groom them. Last year, the company [began](#) making young teens' accounts private by default once they signed up for Instagram, and they stopped adults from being able to send direct messages to teens that don't follow them. The company also recently [announced](#) a "hidden words"

	<p>feature, which allows users to filter offensive words, phrases and emoji in message requests into a separate inbox.</p> <p>Yubo said it bans posts that threaten, bully or intimidate other people and uses a mix of software and human moderators to curb inappropriate content. People can block others' accounts or report concerns to a team of "safety specialists," who the company says respond to each person's report.</p> <p>Researchers <a href="#">have documented</a> that a history of violence or threats toward women is <a href="#">a common trait among gunmen</a> in mass shootings, as evident in the <a href="#">2016 Orlando nightclub shooting</a> and the 2019 shooting in Dayton, Ohio.</p> <p>Whitney Phillips, a researcher joining the faculty of the University of Oregon this fall, said social networks could do more to push back on violent harassment toward women, but that the threats on their site are a reflection of a larger "boys will be boys" cultural attitude that normalizes men's bad behavior online and offline.</p> <p>"When someone says something violent to you or makes some sort of death threat to you, for many women that happens so often that it wouldn't even register with them," Phillips said.</p>
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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Demands for accountability increase</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/28/uvalde-school-shooting/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/28/uvalde-school-shooting/</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Tex. — On the eve of the president's visit, reeling from constantly shifting depictions of law enforcement's response to a gunman who killed their teachers and children and just before they begin to bury the dead, the people of Uvalde on Saturday took a moment.</p> <p>Most stores downtown were closed up, windows painted with messages such as "Pray for Uvalde" and "Uvalde Strong." At the Rexall, an old-school soda fountain with yellow ribbons and a bouquet tied on the door, a paper sign announced that the restaurant was giving its employees time off to heal.</p> <p>The nation might need the same.</p> <p>President Biden called for national unity in a commencement address at his alma mater, the University of Delaware; he and first lady Jill Biden are scheduled to visit Texas on Sunday. Vice President Harris was in Buffalo to attend a funeral for one of the 10 people killed in the May 14 mass shooting at a grocery store.</p> <p>Demands for accountability in Uvalde increased Saturday after officials acknowledged law enforcement officers improperly waited an excruciatingly long time before rushing the classroom where a gunman killed 19 children and two teachers.</p> <p>Rogelio M. Muñoz, a former city council member who left the panel because of term limits, said in an interview Saturday that what the community had learned so far about the police response is "very concerning."</p> <p>Texas authorities made clear on Friday that many things went wrong earlier in the week. Muñoz criticized the Texas Department of Public Safety for its shifting accounts of what occurred at the school on Tuesday, but he cautioned against drawing too many conclusions.</p> <p>"The facts are still developing and it's hard to assess blame or judgment on anybody when we don't know all the facts," he said.</p> <p>State Sen. Roland Gutierrez, a Democrat who represents Uvalde, said, "We're all angry. Law enforcement's angry," during an interview with CNN on Saturday morning. He said he spoke on Saturday with Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steve McCraw, and that the two men cried together.</p>

The latest official — and troubling — accounts of how that day unfolded have come from McCraw. He confirmed that officers waited for nearly an hour in a hallway outside the locked classroom, where authorities say Salvador Rolando Ramos was shooting children and killing their teachers.

McCraw said local authorities had incorrectly concluded that the gunman was no longer an active shooter and that no more children were at risk. But children inside the room repeatedly called 911 pleading for help, McCraw said.

“It was the wrong decision,” McCraw said during a news briefing. “Period.”

McCraw said the person in charge at the scene was the school district’s police chief, Pedro “Pete” Arredondo. Arredondo did not respond to requests for comment Friday or Saturday, and his home here was guarded by police vehicles.

Gutierrez said he expected McCraw to release a detailed report in the coming week.

“I want to know when each agency was here,” Gutierrez said.

In hindsight, some officials and law enforcement experts are questioning whether Arredondo should have remained the on-scene commander during an active-shooter situation after other agencies arrived at Robb Elementary.

Kenneth S. Trump, president of National School Safety and Security Services, noted that designating a strong on-scene commander can be critical to responding to tragedies. On-scene responsibilities also can be passed off to an official at a different agency with more of a tactical background, he said.

“The point is, someone needs to be the incident commander,” Trump said.

“These school-based police programs can save lives, but that doesn’t matter to those parents and people of that community in Uvalde when incidents like these occur.”

The Texas Association of School Resource Officers, which trains police on how to respond to school shootings and other threats, emphasizes in its trainings that police officers need to be prepared to face active shooters without waiting for backup,

“Before the cavalry come, you have to actually be engaging with this guy,” TASRO Vice President Michael Boyd said in an interview Saturday.

A training guide on the website of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement dated January 2020, which is the training that TASRO uses in its courses, notes that “a first responder unwilling to place the lives of the innocent above their own safety should consider another career field.”

Texas House Bill 2195, which was enacted in 2019, required school officers to complete an active-shooter training program approved by the commission.

Michael Dorn, executive director of Safe Havens International, a nonprofit campus safety organization, wasn’t alarmed that Arredondo remained in charge on Tuesday. But Dorn was concerned that the Uvalde Consolidated Independent School District, which includes Robb Elementary, relied on the “Standard Response Protocol,” a process for how students respond during an emergency. It is a nationally recognized method developed by the “I Love U Guys” Foundation focusing on school safety, according to the foundation’s website.

Dorn argued that the protocol, which is popular because of its emotive marketing and ease of implementation, is an “extremely unsound approach” because he claims it regularly fails to train school employees on how to properly lock down a classroom.

“These mistakes were made long before this event,” Dorn said. “We’ve been telling clients not to use the SRP for years,” Dorn said.

John-Michael Keyes, executive director of the “I Love U Guys” Foundation, defended the program as “basic guidance based on sound factual conclusions.”

“It’s really important we have a lot of voices in this conversation, and I think absolute evaluation is imperative,” he said.

Kim Vickers, executive director of the Texas Commission on Law Enforcement, said that he was reluctant to criticize the actions that took place on Tuesday based on the limited information available in the immediate aftermath.

“I will say at face value, it appears that normal active-shooter protocols might not have been followed,” Vickers said in an interview. “I’ve been through multiple active-shooter courses. The emphasis is to move quickly and engage.”

Another facet of the police response that has come under question is why officers had to wait for keys from a janitor to finally unlock the classroom door and kill the gunman. Vickers said there is no Texas regulation or protocol on whether master keys to all classrooms in a building should be available and to whom.

“It does seem that it would make sense to have access to public buildings like that for a department, but that’s a local control issue,” he said.

Jeff Foley, TASRO president and training coordinator, said that all officers working at the school district where he is employed have a set of master keys that will open any door throughout the entire district.

“If an active shooter comes into one of my campuses, the responding officers have the ability to have keys and get in,” Foley said.

The sheer number of mass shootings this year has led to numerous calls for a tougher response from the federal government.

Harris went to Buffalo on Saturday to meet with relatives of those killed and attend a funeral for 86-year-old Ruth Whitfield. Biden visited the city on May 17.

During a commencement speech on Saturday, Biden nodded to the tragedies that have gripped the nation.

“As I speak, those parents are literally preparing to bury their children. In the United States of America — to bury their children. There’s too much violence, too much fear, too much grief,” Biden said.

Biden alternated between sorrow and the kind of optimism about the future that is a hallmark of commencement addresses.

“We cannot outlaw tragedy, I know, but we can make Americans safer,” Biden said. “We can finally do what we have to protect the lives of the people and of our children. So I call on all Americans in this hour to join hands and make your voices heard and work together to make this nation what it can and should be.”

The White House has called for increased gun-control measures, but Biden was not specific in his speech about what those proposals would be. Harris, speaking to reporters, was: “We are not sitting around waiting to figure out what the solution is. Let’s have an assault weapons ban.”

Here in Uvalde, a seemingly endless schedule of funerals has been released, beginning Tuesday and stretching for nearly two weeks. One of the first will be for Amerie Jo Garza, one of the 19 children killed.

If the community was convulsed with grief, the Uvalde town square was its broken heart.

By Saturday, the white crosses placed around the fountain at its center — one for each victim — had been partially obscured behind heaps of heart-shaped balloons, teddy bears and flowers, some of them starting to wilt under the heavy sun.

“Everyone’s still trying to process and wrap their head around it,” said Emma Clark, 34, who came to hand out multicolor chalk in her maroon Uvalde hat. “What’s clear now is the strength in our community and how we’ve been able to get together and mourn together.”

The site had become a kind of pilgrimage spot, too, for many others from far beyond.

On the gray pathways around the square, people wrote chalk messages that cited Bible verses and said “God is still the light!”

Alayna Borrego, 11, arrived with a different message.

She had attended Robb Elementary just a few years ago and had befriended one of the victims, Jacklyn Cazares, in an after-school gymnastics class.

On Saturday, she arrived with a white poster almost as tall as she was, on which she scribbled: “I want to live. I want to study. I want to be a dentist. Don’t kill me!”

“We’ve been feeling really scared to go back to school,” Alayna said. “It’s scary to know this could happen in any school, that they could do it again and again and again if they would like to.”

The grown-ups, she said, needed to do something to fix it.

“Some people should not have weapons they’re allowed to get,” she said. “And the police officers should have everything more controlled.”

Muñoz, the former city council member, had a similar message.

“The focus is going to shift to whether the police didn’t respond appropriately but the one indisputable fact is that if this kid, who was 18 years old, wasn’t able to buy a gun this wouldn’t have happened,” Muñoz said. “We have a large segment of the population that believe that any gun restriction is anti-American and it’s just hard to understand. What I would ask those people is, how many more kids have to die?”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 What Canada doesn’t know about its guns</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/world/canada/gun-laws-canada.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/world/canada/gun-laws-canada.html</a>
GIST	<p>A drone lifted off from Michigan this month and flew across the St. Clair River toward Port Lambton, Ontario. Its spooked pilot aborted the landing after being spotted by a neighbor, leaving the police to later fish the drone out of a tree and discover 11 handguns strapped to it with plastic bags, tape and carabiner clips.</p> <p>Not much is known about the origins of the guns associated with crime in Canada. But the police have long held that most illicit firearms are smuggled from the United States, home to <a href="#">more guns than any other country</a>.</p> <p>The problem is also glaring on the U.S.-Mexico border. Last August, <a href="#">Mexico sued 10 American gunmakers</a>, blaming them for fueling violence in Mexico.</p>

The spillover across Canada's border with the United States extends beyond the guns themselves to the shared grief and calls for increased firearms regulations in the wake of mass shootings, including two just this month: 10 people were killed in a [racist attack in a Buffalo supermarket](#) on May 14; and 19 students and two teachers were killed on Tuesday at an [elementary school in Uvalde, Texas](#).

"I think of the parents suffering unbelievable losses in Texas," Prime Minister Justin Trudeau told reporters in Saskatoon on Wednesday. "I also think of the teachers because I was a teacher, professionally obliged to care for and support our kids." He added that the government will take "new steps in the coming weeks on gun control."

Two years ago, after the [deadliest mass shooting in Canada's history](#) took place in Nova Scotia, his government [banned military-style assault weapons](#). Last week, it carried out previously announced firearms record-keeping regulations. (Two of the guns used by the Nova Scotia shooter were smuggled from the United States, according to documents revealed in the [ongoing public inquiry](#) about the mass shooting.)

As of May 18, Canadians who purchase a nonrestricted firearm, basically a rifle or shotgun, must provide identification as well as a valid firearms license. Businesses are required to keep these records, which may be viewed by the police with a warrant.

Canada's previous registry for shotguns and standard rifles was maintained by the federal government rather than sellers. That long-gun registry, which was plagued by technical issues but supported by most police forces, was scrapped in 2012 by Stephen Harper, the prime minister of the Conservative government at the time.

"Conservatives very much associate themselves now with the opposition to gun control, but that wasn't always the case," Blake Brown, a history professor at Saint Mary's University in Halifax, told me. He said that Liberals and Conservatives passed firearms control measures in the 1950s and 1960s, and that both parties strengthened Canada's gun laws in the years following the [1989 Montreal massacre](#).

In his book "Arming and Disarming: A History of Gun Control in Canada," Professor Brown wrote that Canada's cultural attitudes toward firearms diverged from those in the United States as early as the 1860s.

"Certainly there have been periods in American history where they've been more aggressive in gun control than in Canada," he said. "But, overall, the trend has been that Canada has seen themselves differently when it comes to firearms." That has led to stricter gun laws amid fears of importing American gun violence.

Despite these historical distinctions, the gun debate raging south of the border often reverberates here. While it was [far from the spotlight issue](#) in our federal election last September, candidates in the ongoing [Conservative Party leadership race](#) have been rehashing it.

During our federal election coverage in September, my colleague Ian Austen reported that there were [12.7 million legal and illegal guns in Canada](#), or 34.7 civilian firearms per 100 people in 2017, the most recent data. (These figures are from the Small Arms Survey, a nonprofit organization based in Switzerland, which estimates that there are more than 300 million guns in the United States and 120.5 firearms per 100 people.)

Around the time of the election, I obtained government records related to Canada's decision to ban assault-style guns. The documents, previously released under access-to-information laws, include a partly-redacted report by Criminal Intelligence Service Canada, an interagency group. It found that shotguns and rifles in Canada's illegal market generally enter the system through legal purchases. That's unlike illicit handguns, it said, which tend to be smuggled into Canada.

In response to my queries last fall, neither the Royal Canadian Mounted Police nor Statistics Canada said they had smuggling data. Neither did the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, which announced last April that it had created a cross-border task force with Canada to tackle gun smuggling.

The Canada Border Services Agency [tracks seizures at the border](#), but there is a gap in Canada's understanding of the extent of the smuggling issue.

Since there is no systemic data collection on the origins of crime guns, one internal Statistics Canada presentation I read emphatically placed it in the "What we don't know" category.

In the last couple of years, these data gaps propelled the federal public safety and statistics agencies to push for more comprehensive collection of data on guns.

While tracing the source of guns used in crime is currently required only in Ontario, the Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police "is hoping to move the entire country" in that direction, Natalie Wright, a spokeswoman for the group, said in an email.

Without gun tracing and better data, the full picture of the United States' effect on gun crimes in Canada will remain incomplete and based on haphazardly-tracked incidents like that of the gun-toting drone.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Punching a flight attendant: 15mo. in jail</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/us/flight-attendant-punched-sentencing.html">https://www.nytimes.com/2022/05/28/us/flight-attendant-punched-sentencing.html</a>
GIST	<p>A California woman who repeatedly punched a Southwest Airlines flight attendant last year, bloodying her face and chipping three of her teeth, was sentenced on Friday to 15 months in federal prison, prosecutors said.</p> <p>The woman, Vyvianna M. Quinonez, 29, of Sacramento, will also have to pay nearly \$26,000 in restitution and a \$7,500 fine, according to the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Southern District of California. A video of the attack, which occurred in May 2021, was widely viewed on social media.</p> <p>Judge Todd W. Robinson of United States District Court also ordered Ms. Quinonez to be on supervised release for three years after completing her sentence, during which she will be barred from flying on any commercial aircraft.</p> <p>The assault came amid a surge of unruly and violent behavior by passengers who shoved, struck and yelled at flight attendants. Within days of the attack, two major airlines, American and Southwest, <a href="#">postponed plans</a> to begin serving alcohol again on flights, in an effort to stop the behavior. Both airlines have since resumed alcohol sales.</p> <p>"Violence on aircraft endangers the lives of all onboard," Randy Grossman, the U.S. attorney for the Southern District of California, said in a statement on Friday. "Attacks on flight crew members, who perform vital jobs to ensure passenger safety, will not be tolerated."</p> <p>A lawyer for Ms. Quinonez, who pleaded guilty in December in connection with the assault, could not immediately be reached for comment late Friday.</p> <p>In a letter filed with the court on May 20, Ms. Quinonez apologized for assaulting the flight attendant. She said she had been depressed and humiliated because of the negative attention. The experience, she said, "changed me profoundly."</p> <p>On May 23, 2021, near the end of a flight from Sacramento to San Diego, a flight attendant asked Ms. Quinonez to buckle her seatbelt, put up her tray table and "wear her face mask properly," prosecutors said.</p>



Ms. Quinonez used her phone to film the flight attendant and pushed the woman, prosecutors said. The attack escalated from there, as captured [on video](#) by another passenger.

Ms. Quinonez, who was sitting in an aisle seat, stood up and punched the attendant in the face multiple times, according to the video. She also grabbed her hair before the woman was able to move back up the aisle. Several passengers grabbed at Ms. Quinonez's clothes to try to stop her.

Prosecutors said the flight attendant, who was not named in court documents, was taken to a hospital with injuries that included a swollen eye, a bruised arm and a cut under her eye that had to be stitched. They said she also had three chipped teeth, two of which had to be replaced with crowns.

According to court documents, Ms. Quinonez sought a sentence of time served while prosecutors had requested four months in custody and six months in home confinement. In imposing the longer sentence, Judge Robinson "strongly considered the need for general deterrence," Jaclyn Stahl, an assistant U.S. attorney, said in an email.

"He explained that the victims included not just the flight attendant victim and Southwest Airlines, but all passengers on the plane that day and flight attendants working in the industry," Ms. Stahl said.

In a letter dated May 18 and addressed to Judge Robinson, a Southwest representative said that the company wanted the sentence to serve as a deterrent to unruly and violent behavior. The letter said that the company's executive team had heard from "countless flight attendants" who felt under attack during a pandemic that pushed fear around travel to an all-time high.

"What happened on Flight 700 was absolutely horrific," wrote Sonya Lacore, a vice president at Southwest. "In my 20+ year career at Southwest, I have never seen such an inexcusable, violent assault of a flight attendant by a passenger. Even worse, the incident was captured on video and cast across television and media channels."

"The video of the assault still sickens me," she added.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Uvalde fail police response, shattered trust</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/28/uvalde-classroom-police-911-failure/">https://www.washingtonpost.com/nation/2022/05/28/uvalde-classroom-police-911-failure/</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Tex. — After slipping into Robb Elementary through an unlocked side entrance, 18-year-old Salvador Rolando Ramos stormed into adjoining classrooms and informed terrified fourth graders that it was "time to die."</p> <p>"Good night," Ramos said, before shooting and killing a teacher.</p> <p>Students were next, according to witness accounts. Children who had been watching "Lilo &amp; Stitch" scrambled for hiding places. Hot shrapnel burned through the dressy outfits some had worn for an awards ceremony earlier on the morning of May 24. One girl smeared herself with a classmate's blood and played dead.</p> <p>The attack went on for so long, witnesses said, that the gunman had time to taunt his victims before killing them, even putting on songs that one student <a href="#">described to CNN</a> as "I-want-people-to-die music." As the minutes ticked by, increasingly desperate students called 911.</p> <p>At 12:03 p.m., a girl called 911 for a little over a minute and whispered that she was in Room 112, according to Texas Department of Public Safety Director Steven C. McCraw. She called back at 12:10 p.m. reporting multiple people dead, he said, and again a few minutes later, to say there were still a number of students alive.</p> <p>"Please send the police now," the girl begged the dispatcher at 12:43 p.m., 40 minutes after her first call.</p>

More time would lapse before authorities finally entered and killed Ramos just before 1 p.m. By then, the gunman had turned a sleepy afternoon at the end of the school year into a 90-minute massacre — an attack prolonged and worsened by the failure of security measures and a catastrophically slow response from authorities in this southern Texas town.

In all, 19 children and two teachers were killed, with another 17 people wounded, a devastating toll for a small, tightly woven, largely Hispanic community where it was common for relatives to be in the same class at school. In the days that followed, local heartbreak bubbled into rage as Texas officials waxed on about police bravery, glossing over law enforcement missteps that took days to acknowledge.

Only now, a more reliable chronology is emerging through official statements, 911 logs, social media posts, and interviews with survivors and witnesses. The revelations tell a story of institutional failure at the expense of unprotected children. Here in Uvalde, there is little expectation that correcting the record will lead to any real policy change, especially with hyperpartisan midterm elections looming.

“I mean, there’s protests on gun laws and stuff, background checks, but it doesn’t go anywhere,” said Angel Flores, 17, speaking at a San Antonio hospital where she was visiting two relatives who were taken there after being shot in Uvalde.

“Sandy Hook happened, what, 10 years ago?” said Angel’s father, 37-year-old David Flores, referring to the 2012 mass shooting at an elementary school in Newtown, Conn. “It’s the same thing, down the road again. Nothing changes.”

### **Ninety minutes of terror**

On Tuesday morning, Dora and Bob Estrada settled in to watch their favorite daytime soap, “The Bold and the Beautiful.”

While waiting for her show to start, Dora heard two popping sounds from the direction of Robb Elementary across the street. She told her husband she thought it was gunfire.

“He said, ‘No, that can’t be,’” Dora recalled. “I said, ‘No, that is shots.’”

Dora worried about her grandson, Jayden, a second grader at Robb. A short time later, her daughter, Jayden’s mother, called to warn her parents to lock their door; she’d heard of an active-shooter threat. The Estradas decided to go outside and check on the school and noticed “a bunch of cops on the corner.”

“They were just standing there,” Dora said.

Given the time frame, those first pops Dora heard likely came from early shots Ramos fired as soon as he arrived at the school at 11:28 a.m., targeting people on the street who heard him crash his truck into a ditch and were coming to his aid. Minutes earlier he had shot his 66-year-old grandmother in the face at their nearby home, took her vehicle and drove the short distance to Robb Elementary. The grandmother survived and called 911; authorities have not released the exact timing or content of her 911 call.

New details have dispelled earlier accounts of a confrontation between the gunman and an armed school police officer outside the school, a story the authorities changed four times. First, officials said the gunman exchanged fire with the officer outside the school before going in. Later, McCraw said that there was an encounter, but no gunshots were exchanged between the two. On Thursday, officials said there had been no confrontation at all and that the gunman had simply walked in. On Friday, McCraw added that the school police officer was not on campus but rushed there after the 911 call about a man with a gun at the crash.

“He drove right by the suspect,” who was crouched behind a vehicle in the parking lot, and mistook a teacher for an intruder, McCraw said.

Ramos entered the school at 11:33 a.m. through a back door that should have been locked but had been propped open, authorities said. The shooter walked to the rear of the building, turned down a hall and began firing into classrooms 111 and 112, authorities said, unloading more than 100 rounds of ammunition in those first moments.

At the sound of gunshots, children and staff in other parts of the building began streaming out of the school, some heading for safety in a nearby funeral home. Others didn't have time to run.

In Room 109, teacher Elsa Avila rushed to lock the door and turn off the lights. She told her students to hide under their desks, recalled a 9-year-old survivor, Daniel, whose mother asked that his last name not be used.

Daniel saw Ramos approach the window of his classroom door and shoot through the glass, striking Avila and another student a few feet away from him. Daniel said he and others were "playing dead" inside the classroom because they feared he could see them.

Bullets zinged around the classroom, with one fragment striking a fellow student's nose. Daniel recalled a "crunching" sound as it struck bone. Stymied by the locked door, Ramos moved back down the hallway, returning to Rooms 111 and 112, the adjoining classrooms.

McCraw said that three officers with the Uvalde Police Department were the first officers into the school and that two received grazing wounds at that time from Ramos.

McCraw said Ramos had locked the doors to Rooms 111 and 112 but briefly re-emerged into the hall — at a time McCraw did not specify, but this is likely when those in Room 109 were shot at — before locking himself in the adjoining classrooms again.

Gunfire was heard at 11:37 a.m., 11:38 a.m., 11:40 a.m. and 11:44 a.m., McCraw said.

Four more local officers — from the police department and county sheriff's office — arrived, according to McCraw, at a time he did not say.

None of the officers attempted to enter Rooms 111 and 112 and engage the gunman, officials said.

By at least 12:15 p.m. McCraw said, "as many as 19" law enforcement officers had converged on a school hallway, including Border Patrol tactical team members who arrived with shields.

"There was plenty of officers to do whatever needed to be done," McCraw said. But the incident commander believed more equipment and people were needed for a "breach," McCraw said, and he added that there was a sense that law enforcement "had time" and saw "no kids at risk."

At almost exactly the same time, the student in Room 112 called again. She said eight or nine students were alive. Three minutes later, at 12:19 p.m., a student in Room 111 called 911 but hung up at the urging of another student, McCraw said. At 12:21 p.m., he said, three shots could be heard over the 911 line.

As the attack was underway, frantic parents began showing up at Robb after receiving active-shooter alerts. The scene outside the police cordon grew tense as families demanded to know why officers weren't storming into the building to save their children. Video shows distraught families pacing, rushing the cordon, cursing at officers.

Dany Reyz, 51, heard about the gunfire at his repair shop half a mile from Robb, where his grandson and six nieces and nephews are enrolled. He immediately drove over, arriving around 11:40 a.m., according to phone logs that detail the frantic calls he was making as he looked for a place to park.

When he made it to the scene, Reyz said, more than a dozen parents already were huddled near the entrance of the school, demanding that officers do more to intervene. On the east side of the building, he

said, another group of parents were trying to push through a fence to get inside the school, but were being repelled by police.

Felix Rubio, 39, a relative of Reyzy, heard enraged parents tell officers to “go do your f----- job.” When authorities insisted they were doing their jobs, Rubio said, a man yelled for them to, “get your f----- rifle and handle business.”

The distraught parents could do nothing but wait, trusting that authorities were doing all they could to protect students.

“Six-year-old kids in there,” lamented one man in a video taken outside the school that day. “They don’t know how to defend themselves from a shooter.”

By the time authorities declared the attack over, just after 1 p.m., the Estradas had found their grandson’s teacher and learned that he was safe. Reyzy’s grandson and nephews also got out, but a niece, 9-year-old Eliana Garcia, was shot and killed.

Some parents only learned their children were dead hours later, at a local civic center where families were asked to wait for updates and, in some cases, submit DNA samples to help identify victims. Over and over, witnesses said, parents were led to a private room where authorities broke the news.

The families’ screams could be heard from outside the building.

### **Aftermath and accountability**

Even for a nation hardened by the frequency of mass shootings, the tragedy in Uvalde seemed too much to bear. News anchors wept on live TV. Families eulogized slain children in widely shared social media posts, drawing Americans into a visceral experience of grief.

At a news conference the day after the attack, Texas Gov. Greg Abbott (R), flanked by state law enforcement officials, mourned the deaths but praised law enforcement for what he described as a brave response that likely saved lives.

The event was briefly interrupted by Democratic gubernatorial candidate Beto O’Rourke, who was removed while heckling Abbott about lax gun laws.

The governor’s praise for law enforcement agencies also didn’t sit well with Robb Elementary parents who had video evidence showing how they pleaded with officers to go inside the school. Fact-checkers found other holes and inaccuracies, and soon the official story collapsed in what one cable-news anchor called “a Texas-sized mess.”

On Friday, Abbott backed off his earlier remarks, saying he was livid about being “misled.”

McCraw said an incident commander in charge of the police response made “the wrong decision” when he stopped treating the gunman as an active shooter and instead viewed him as a “barricaded subject” as his shots became less frequent.

An off-duty Border Patrol tactical agent from the agency’s BORTAC unit was the first of several agents to arrive outside the classroom around 12:15 p.m., according to a U.S. Customs and Border Protection official who spoke on the condition of anonymity to share preliminary details of the investigation. Local police and other officers assembled in the hallway told the agent the shooter was barricaded inside the classroom, which the agent described as “quiet,” according to the official.

“They have not told me they were frustrated,” the official said, of the decision not to go after the shooter. “But they told me it was hard to discern who was in charge.”

The agents did not have a battering ram or breaching tools. A U.S. Marshal on the scene provided the agents with a ballistic shield, the official said.

McCraw said Friday that officers finally used keys they got from a janitor to unlock the classroom doors. When the team finally moved on the shooter, they found him hiding in a closet in Room 111. He came out firing as the Border Patrol tactical agents entered the room behind the ballistic shield.

One of the BORTAC agents was grazed on the head, and took some shrapnel in the foot, but wounds were light. The agents saw children piled up around the room, huddled together, some still alive but many deceased, the official said.

“It hurts to think there are many things that they didn’t do,” said Joe Rodriguez, 64, who was heading to Robb Elementary on Friday to drop flowers off at a wooden cross to memorialize his granddaughter, Tess Mata.

“They could have saved her,” Rodriguez said. “They could have saved some lives.”

At the memorial on Uvalde’s Main Street, Amanda Flores said she knew all 21 victims. Some were close family friends while others were friends of her grandchildren, one of whom was at Robb Elementary on the day of the shooting.

Flores said she was hesitant to criticize the law enforcement response — she said Uvalde is proud of its police force, and is also home to scores of Customs and Border Protection agents. She said one of her close friends, a border agent, sprang from the barber’s chair in the middle of a haircut to respond to the shooting.

Still, Flores said, there’s no getting around the hard facts of the law enforcement response: “We needed the help ASAP for our kids, and it wasn’t there.”

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 School shooting timeline: 78 long minutes</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/05/28/us/school-shooting-timeline-uvalde-texas.html">https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2022/05/28/us/school-shooting-timeline-uvalde-texas.html</a>
GIST	<p>When families learned that a gunman had entered Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, at 11:33 a.m. on May 24, a brutal wait began. Police on the scene did not stop the gunman until well over an hour after he walked into the school, raising questions about whether lives could have been saved if they had acted sooner. Parents who rushed to the school were held outside, where many were forced to wait to learn if their children were safe.</p> <p>What follows is an account of each of those 78 minutes, as told by video evidence, statements by witnesses and law enforcement, and accounts of 911 calls.</p> <p><b>11:33 a.m.</b> The gunman enters the school. He uses a back door that had been propped open by a teacher six minutes earlier. He walks down a hallway, banging and kicking on at least one locked door before moving toward two connected classrooms, 111 and 112.</p> <p>Two teachers, Eva Mireles and Irma Garcia, had been screening the movie “Lilo &amp; Stitch” for fourth graders in the classrooms.</p> <p>The gunman would fire more than 100 rounds.</p> <p><b>11:34 a.m.</b></p> <p><b>11:35 a.m.</b> Three Uvalde Police Department officers enter the school through the same door. Two are grazed by shots fired by the gunman. Four more officers soon enter the building.</p> <p><b>11:36 a.m.</b></p>

**11:37 a.m.**

More gunshots. Another 16 rounds are fired. Officers continue to arrive on the scene.

**11:38 a.m.**

5 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:39 a.m.**

6 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:40 a.m.**

7 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:41 a.m.**

8 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:42 a.m.**

9 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:43 a.m.**

The school posts on Facebook that the school is under lockdown, and then emails parents.

**11:44 a.m.**

11 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:45 a.m.**

12 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:46 a.m.**

13 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:47 a.m.**

14 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:48 a.m.**

15 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:49 a.m.**

16 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:50 a.m.**

17 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:51 a.m.**

18 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:52 a.m.**

19 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:53 a.m.**

20 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:54 a.m.**

People are gathering outside the school. Tension is building between parents and police.

**11:55 a.m.**

22 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:56 a.m.**

“Our kids, that’s what we’re worried about,” one mother can be heard saying on a livestreamed video. She adds, “Our kids are there, man! My son’s right there!”

**11:57 a.m.**

24 minutes since gunman entered school

**11:58 a.m.**

A police officer pushes a man who is making a phone call outside the school, yelling at the people gathering to move across the street. “Six-year-old kids in there, they don’t know how to defend themselves from a shooter!” yells one person.

**11:59 a.m.**

26 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:00 p.m.**

27 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:01 p.m.**

28 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:02 p.m.**

29 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:03 p.m.**

It is 30 minutes since the gunman entered. As many as 19 officers are in the school hallway.

A student calls 911 and whispers that she is in room 112. The call lasts one minute and 23 seconds.

**12:04 p.m.**

31 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:05 p.m.**

Some students and staff members who had been locked down in the cafeteria on the other side of the school are able to flee.

**12:06 p.m.**

Some students in another classroom escape through a window.

**12:07 p.m.**

34 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:08 p.m.**

35 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:09 p.m.**

A helicopter is flying above the school, and people are gathering on the streets nearby.

**12:10 p.m.**

The same student calls 911 again and says multiple people are dead.

**12:11 p.m.**



A police officer with a megaphone announces to the crowd outside that “When the kids get moved, we’re going to move them to the back of the funeral home,” referring to Hillcrest Memorial Funeral Home across the street. “That’s where we want y’all waiting at,” he says.

**12:12 p.m.**

39 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:13 p.m.**

The same student calls 911 for the third time.

**12:14 p.m.**

41 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:15 p.m.**

Members of the Border Patrol Tactical Unit arrive with shields.

**12:16 p.m.**

The same student calls 911 again and says that eight to nine students are still alive.

**12:17 p.m.**

The school district posts on Facebook that there is an active shooter at the school and asks people to stay away.

**12:18 p.m.**

45 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:19 p.m.**

A different girl, in room 111, calls 911. She hangs up when another student tells her to.

**12:20 p.m.**

47 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:21 p.m.**

Police hear the gunman fire again. They move down the hallway. Three shots are later heard over a 911 call.

**12:22 p.m.**

49 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:23 p.m.**

50 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:24 p.m.**

51 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:25 p.m.**

52 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:26 p.m.**

Many students are seen walking out of the school on the other side in a livestreamed video. The man recording recognizes one of the children. “Tell your mom hi. Tell her you’re OK,” he says.

**12:27 p.m.**

54 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:28 p.m.**

55 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:29 p.m.**

56 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:30 p.m.**

The school district posts on Facebook that students who made it out of the school are being taken to an auditorium at the high school on the other side of town.

**12:31 p.m.**

58 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:32 p.m.**

59 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:33 p.m.**

60 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:34 p.m.**

61 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:35 p.m.**

It's now been one hour since police entered the building.

**12:36 p.m.**

The first student calls 911 again. She is told to stay on the line and stay quiet.  
The student tells 911 that the gunman shot the door.

**12:37 p.m.**

64 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:38 p.m.**

65 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:39 p.m.**

66 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:40 p.m.**

The school district edits its post on Facebook to say that the students are being taken to a civic center downtown instead of the high school to reunite with their guardians.

**12:41 p.m.**

People continue to gather up and down the two roads that lead to school entrances.

**12:42 p.m.**

An officer carrying a shield is seen running toward the building.

**12:43 p.m.**

70 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:44 p.m.**

71 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:45 p.m.**

A man is filming the scene from outside of the school. “I’ve seen like 20 parents, maybe more, crying,” he says. “Wanting to know what’s happening to their kids. Because there’s still kids in there. And then, parents see that there’s ambulances taking the kids in.”

**12:46 p.m.**

The student on the phone with 911 says she can hear the police next door.

**12:47 p.m.**

The student again asks 911 to please send the police now.

**12:48 p.m.**

75 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:49 p.m.**

76 minutes since gunman entered school

**12:50 p.m.**

Specially trained Border Patrol officers unlock and open a classroom door using a master key given to them by a janitor. They enter the classroom and fire 27 times, killing the gunman.

Shots are heard over the 911 call.

**12:51 p.m.**

The girl in room 112 is still on the phone with 911. Officers can be heard moving children out of the classroom, including her. When the call ends, she is outside.

The crowd of parents surges forward as kids are carried and escorted out. A man yells out “Miah! Miah! That’s my daughter!” as a police officer runs carrying a girl dressed in pink.

The toll — 19 students and two teachers dead, and more than a dozen others wounded — would not be released until many hours later.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Uvalde officers question decision to wait</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/28/us/texas-school-shooting">https://www.nytimes.com/live/2022/05/28/us/texas-school-shooting</a>
GIST	<p>UVALDE, Texas — From the first minutes after a gunman began shooting, officers descended on Robb Elementary School. Local police from the town of Uvalde. County sheriff’s deputies. Agents from the federal Border Patrol.</p> <p>But none of the growing number of agencies had control over the scores of officers at the scene on Tuesday of what would become the deadliest school shooting since the massacre at Sandy Hook Elementary School a decade ago.</p> <p>That fell to the chief of a small police department created only four years ago to help provide security at Uvalde’s eight schools. Its chief, Pedro Arredondo, had ordered the assembled officers to hold off on storming the two adjoining classrooms where the gunman had already fired more than 100 rounds at the walls, the door and the terrified fourth-graders locked inside with him, the state police said.</p> <p>As Uvalde lurched into a holiday weekend of somber gatherings and free public barbecues, questions mounted over Chief Arredondo, the role of the police and whether any of the 21 lives that were lost could have been saved.</p> <p>At a vigil on Saturday evening, hundreds of mourners met in the parking lot behind Sacred Heart Catholic Church and were urged by the pastor not to dwell in anger. On Sunday, emotions will run high again with a scheduled visit from President Biden.</p>

The degree to which some law enforcement officers on the scene disagreed with the decision to hold back became more apparent on Saturday, as more became known about their frustrations in the protracted chaos of Tuesday's shooting.

Specially trained agents from the Border Patrol, who arrived more than 40 minutes after the shooting had begun, had yelled for permission to go in and confront the gunman. "What is your problem?" they asked, according to an official briefed on the response.

Inside the classrooms, children whose classmates lay dead around them quietly called 911 over and over again, at times pleading with dispatchers to send the police in to rescue them.

Roland Gutierrez, who represents the area in the State Senate, said the family of one of the children killed told him that their daughter had been struck by a single bullet to the back and had bled to death. "It is possible she could have been saved, if they had done their jobs," Mr. Gutierrez said.

Ultimately, the police officers assembled outside won permission to enter the classroom. A team of tactical officers from the Border Patrol and local police agencies breached the door and killed the 18-year-old gunman, Salvador Ramos, after he had killed 19 children and two teachers inside.

The decision to wait appeared to those agents at the time, and to many policing experts afterward, as out-of-step with practices that have been in place in departments around the country for two decades since the deadly shooting at Columbine High School in 1999.

"The change from Columbine has not necessarily been accepted by agencies across the country, and that's what you saw in this situation," said Chuck Wexler, the head of the Police Executive Research Forum, a Washington-based think tank. "There are still departments in this country where there is ambiguity about this policy."

Others, including some that have provided active shooter trainings, have counseled that rushing in may not always be the best approach. "When the story is ultimately told, he did exactly what they were trained for and based on pragmatic experience in the fog of war," said John-Michael Keyes, whose group conducts active shooter trainings for police officers and school districts in Texas, speaking of Chief Arredondo.

Two officers from the Uvalde Police Department were shot through the locked door to the classroom in the first minutes of the attack, and fell back into the hallway with grazing wounds.

Officers were told, under Chief Arredondo's direction, that the situation had evolved from one with an active shooter — which would call for immediately attacking the gunman, even before rescuing other children — to one with a barricaded subject, which would call for a slower approach, officials said.

That appeared to be an incorrect assessment, according to the state police director, Steven McCraw: Gunfire could sporadically be heard inside the rooms, including on continuing 911 calls by the children.

Part of the investigation into the shooting and the police response included whether Chief Arredondo knew about the 911 calls that were coming in, suggesting a possible breakdown in communications during the chaotic and deadly event, according to an official briefed on the inquiry, which is being led by the Texas Rangers.

Investigators were also looking into whether an attempt was made, during the standoff, to take incident command away from Chief Arredondo.

Gil Kerlikowske, a former Seattle police chief who later served as the head of U.S. Customs and Border Protection, said he was surprised to hear that the chief of the school district police force, which has only six officers, was the incident commander during the shooting.

While the school grounds may have been the district's jurisdiction, Mr. Kerlikowske said, he would have expected the district to promptly defer control to the city police department, which would have more experience with major incidents. He said city police might then pass along control to an agency like the Texas Department of Public Safety, once it was established on scene.

But, Mr. Kerlikowske said, he could also see a situation where the larger agency might need to come in and put pressure on the early commander to relinquish control.

Brandon Judd, head of the Border Patrol Council, the agents' union, said that in no case would Border Patrol agents have sought to assume command themselves.

"Every single training that is given, you have an incident commander, and that incident commander has the authority to make all the decisions," Mr. Judd said on Saturday. That is what they are trained to do, he said. And when the agents arrive long after the situation has begun, he said, it is even more important that they follow the chain of command.

The Border Patrol agents who arrived at the chaotic scene on Tuesday were surprised at the absence of specially equipped and trained officers from the local police department who were capable of raiding the classrooms, said the official familiar with the federal agency's response.

The Uvalde Police Department, which has employed about 40 sworn officers in recent years, uses some of its members as a kind of SWAT team, often for drug seizures, according to the department's annual reports. It was not clear why a Border Patrol team that was a 40-minute drive away was instead asked to lead the assault.

The failures in the response probably extended beyond the decisions made by one small police department, said Mr. Gutierrez, the state senator.

"How can you blame it all on a chief of police of a school district with six cops?" Mr. Gutierrez said. "Everybody failed here."

Among the first 911 calls of a gunman on the loose on Tuesday came not from the school but from a house nearby. The gunman, who lived with his grandmother a few streets away, had shot her in the face — a bullet striking near her right eye — and fled toward the school with his weapons, two AR-15-style rifles.

Maria and Gilberto Gallegos, two retired neighbors who were outside at the time, heard two gun blasts from directly across the street. All of a sudden, the gunman came bounding out of the front door with a backpack and a duffel bag and jumped into his grandmother's pickup truck.

"He didn't know how to drive," said Gilbert Gallegos, the couple's son, who relayed their account. "He was just revving, pushing down on the gas. Finally, he peels out, and the tires are throwing pebbles all over."

At that point, he said, the gunman's grandmother, Celia Martinez Gonzales, walked out of her house, her gait steady but her face streaming with blood.

"She says in Spanish to my parents, 'Look what happened,'" Gilbert Gallegos said. Ms. Gallegos called 911 — first at 11:33 a.m. and then two minutes later. The police arrived soon after, followed by an ambulance.

Even before they arrived, he said, his parents could hear gunfire in the area of Robb Elementary School.

Chief Arredondo did not respond to multiple requests for comment on his department's response to the shooting. Nor did the chief of the Uvalde Police Department, Daniel Rodriguez, or several other members of the department and school district leadership.

In many cities across the country, including New York, city police oversee officers who patrol the schools; school districts across Texas have dedicated police departments that operate independently.

The Uvalde Consolidated School District's police department was formed just four years ago. Before that, the city's police department provided school officers, said Mickey Gerdes, who served as board president at the time. But the district and the department could not overcome scheduling conflicts and discussions about costs.

Mr. Gerdes said part of the decision to switch was in response to the rise in school shootings and the desire to increase security at schools. (The school police officer assigned to Robb Elementary was not on campus when Tuesday's attack began.)

Chief Arredondo, a veteran officer of several departments who won election to the City Council two weeks before the shooting, began leading the department in early 2020, a month before the pandemic hit.

He had worked as a top official in the Uvalde Police Department and for the sheriff's department in Webb County, along the border. Before returning to Uvalde, Chief Arredondo led a school district police department in the border city of Laredo, where he had a reputation for being "a tough guy in law enforcement, no nonsense" from his time in the county sheriff's office, said Sergio Mora, a political consultant in Laredo.

During Chief Arredondo's two years, he expanded the department's tiny ranks, adding two officers last year.

Also during those two years, the school district held at least two trainings for how to deal with a gunman opening fire in a school.

Mr. Gerdes, the former school board president, said he had known Chief Arredondo for more than two decades. He said he feared the criticism directed at his handling of Tuesday's shooting reflected the desire for a scapegoat. "He's a good man," Mr. Gerdes said. "He's a decent man."

But the revelations about just how long police officers delayed entering the classroom has sparked anger around Uvalde and demands for an explanation.

Jay Martin, 48, who lives near the school, said he ran to the scene with a friend after they first heard gunshots.

His own daughter, now 12, had once been a student of Eva Mireles, one of the teachers killed, he said on Saturday as he stood at a victims' memorial in a central square.

"Why did they take so long? That's part of being a police officer, putting your life on the line for someone else," he said.

Now, he added, "there's a lot of furious people."

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HEADLINE	05/28 Arrest: threats in Blaine schools lockdown
SOURCE	<a href="https://komonews.com/news/local/boy-arrested-for-making-threats-that-put-blaine-schools-into-lockdown">https://komonews.com/news/local/boy-arrested-for-making-threats-that-put-blaine-schools-into-lockdown</a>
GIST	BELLINGHAM, Wash. - Blaine Police say they arrested a boy early Saturday morning in connection to threats made against the Blaine Schools on Wednesday.

Blaine Police say three juveniles contacted police Friday after they received threatening text messages. The messages were similar to the messages that caused the schools to go into lockdown. All of the messages were sent through an app called "Text Now."

Then around 12:45 a.m. Saturday, another threatening text was sent. Officers say they contacted the person who claimed to be the victim by phone, questioned him about inconsistencies in his stories and the boy reportedly admitted to sending the threatening messages to the other juveniles as well as Blaine Schools.

He was arrested in Bellingham just before 1:30 a.m. Friday and booked into Whatcom County Juvenile Detention Center. Police did not give the age of the boy or say if he attends a school in Blaine.

Blaine School District administrators canceled classes on Thursday and Friday following the threat that was delivered by text message to a student on Wednesday.

In a written statement posted on the district's website, officials said students should "take time for self-care" and that the district would ask state officials for a waiver that would allow students to not be required to make up the missed days.

The cancellation was linked to a series of threats delivered Wednesday via text messages to a student that led to an hours-long lockdown.

No injuries were reported during the lockdown, which began shortly before 3 p.m. and included K-12 students. The lockdown order was lifted over two hours later.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Clearing drug convictions, refunding fines</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-courts-clearing-drug-convictions-refunding-fines">https://www.q13fox.com/news/washington-courts-clearing-drug-convictions-refunding-fines</a>
GIST	<p><b>SEATTLE</b> - People convicted under Washington's longtime felony drug possession law are starting to get their records cleared, and their court-imposed fines refunded.</p> <p>It's a consequence of the <a href="#">Washington</a> Supreme Court's groundbreaking decision to strike down the law in February 2021. But the remedy so far has been complicated, as each county sets its own course.</p> <p>In "State v. Blake," the Washington Supreme Court found the state's ban on simple drug possession to be unconstitutional. That's because it didn't require proof that a person knowingly possessed illegal drugs. The ruling had immediate impacts – police officers stopped arresting people for drug possession, and prosecutors had people released from jail that day.</p> <p>The more massive task underway now is to clear five decades of past convictions, re-sentence people already in custody for other violations, and refund the fines paid by people convicted under that law.</p> <p>In King County, prosecutors say they've created a legal assembly line to address these cases as quickly as possible.</p> <p>"This is happening whether you ask us to or not, it's happening," Senior Attorney Laura Petregal told KUOW. "We're doing it."</p> <p>Prosecutors are seeking judicial orders on their own, without any action by those convicted, working backward from the most recent cases. So, if you check your court file, it may show that a judge in King County Superior Court has already ordered your conviction to be vacated.</p> <p>"We are going through and proactively dismissing those cases, and it's not as simple as pushing a button, right?" Petregal said.</p>



The next step is often to verify how much each person paid in fines. At that point, the person must apply to the clerk's office for a refund and provide their current address.

"We've had people come into the clerk's office and apply for the refunds that the court order made them eligible for," said David Hackett, a senior civil deputy with the prosecutor's office. "And King County has issued checks for \$77,342.44 over a total of 176 cases."

There's a lot more to go. Hackett estimates that there may be up to 150,000 eligible convictions going back to 1971 statewide, with 54,000 of them in King County. He said the process will be even more difficult when they get beyond the electronic court record, and have to confirm older convictions on microfiche.

But Hackett said he knows that clearing these records will make a significant difference in people's lives.

"An individual who's applying for a job, or who's applying for housing, or other important things dealing with life, can truthfully answer that they have never been convicted of a simple drug possession offense," he said.

Hackett said King County has fewer recent cases since prosecutors have de-emphasized charging people with felony drug possession over the past decade. So he said their contact information is less up to date for the people affected by the Blake ruling. That's one reason prosecutors are seeking to proactively clear convictions without notifying those affected.

Benton County in south-central Washington has a larger number of more recent drug possession cases and has taken a different approach. Chief Deputy Prosecutor Ryan Brown said his office sent letters to people with qualifying convictions under "Blake." Those people were referred to a website where they could seek to have their records cleared and their fines refunded. Benton County has issued \$1.5 million in refunds so far.

(This spring the state Legislature provided funding for counties to implement the process and issue the checks.)

By the end of March, King County had vacated 5,040 convictions. Pierce County has vacated 3,777, according to prosecutors. Each county is now establishing its own process.

Pierce County resident Matthew Seed said he's had major frustrations with obtaining his refund for fines paid to Pierce County. Seed said both Thurston and Pierce counties vacated his 15-year-old convictions this past February. And Thurston County issued his \$1,200 refund shortly afterward. But Pierce County has yet to refund his \$1,528 in fines.

Seed said he's made repeated calls to the clerk's office, which administers the refunds, but hasn't been able to get any clarification on the timeline.

"I feel like if I don't continue to be the squeaky wheel and say something, I'm just going to get forgotten about with this," he said.

Seed said he's been sober for five years. He said he needs the refund to pay for more reliable transportation to his job.

"I bought a truck from somebody that wasn't running when I got it. My car had broken down. I fixed it and I just want to license it," he said.

The Pierce County Clerk's Office responded that they have now issued Seed's refund, as part of refunds totaling \$177,091.57 so far. They said their refunds were sent later than some other counties because Pierce County waited for state funding to offset those payments.

Seed said he's glad for the Blake ruling. But he said the harm created by his convictions and fines far exceeded the relief he's getting now.

"They garnished my wages to get the money," he said, "and charged me to do that! Not only that, but I've been denied jobs because I didn't pass a criminal background check, several times."

Prachi Dave is policy and advocacy director at The Public Defender Association, which filed a class-action lawsuit to seek refunds for people statewide. She said the fact that each county has its own process and timing for issuing the refunds is causing confusion.

"We continue to hear that, and I think it's a result of the fact that this is a very patchwork system," she said. Dave said the burden on people to get their record cleared and seek their refunds is another variable.

"That's a lot of work for people who already have a great deal on their plate," she said. "That's going to be hard, and these processes are not necessarily easy to navigate right now."

There is a more uniform process coming – eventually the state's Administrative Office of the Courts will become a central clearinghouse to address the convictions and deliver refunds, but that isn't scheduled to happen until the summer of 2023.

Meanwhile, the state is still trying to figure out whether to penalize drug possession at all. After the "Blake" decision, legislators made simple drug possession a misdemeanor offense, with an emphasis on alternatives to criminal charges. But that law is also set to expire next summer.

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HEADLINE	<b>05/28 Ex-Proud Boys leader remains jail until trial</b>
SOURCE	<a href="https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Ex-Proud-Boys-leader-to-stay-jailed-until-Capitol-17205334.php">https://www.seattlepi.com/news/article/Ex-Proud-Boys-leader-to-stay-jailed-until-Capitol-17205334.php</a>
GIST	<p>The former top leader of the Proud Boys will remain jailed while awaiting trial on charges that he conspired with other members of the far-right extremist group to attack the U.S. Capitol and stop Congress from certifying Joe Biden's presidential victory, a federal judge has ruled.</p> <p>Henry “Enrique” Tarrío poses a danger to the public that cannot be mitigated by home detention and banning him from using social media, U.S. District Judge Timothy Kelly said in an order issued late Friday.</p> <p>Tarrío, a South Florida resident, has been jailed since his arrest on March 8, a day after his indictment on charges including conspiracy. A federal magistrate in Miami previously ordered his pretrial detention.</p> <p>Tarrío and other Proud Boys leaders used encrypted channels, social media and other electronic communications to plan and carry out a plot to storm the Capitol on Jan. 6, 2021, and interfere with the congressional certification of the Electoral College vote, according to the indictment.</p> <p>Tarrío asked Kelly to order his release on bond, but the judge rejected the request. Kelly said the evidence against Tarrío is “very strong” despite Tarrío's argument that authorities essentially do not have “a smoking gun” against him, “perhaps in the form of direct evidence of an order from Tarrío to other Proud Boys to storm the Capitol.”</p> <p>Tarrío was not in Washington when the insurrection took place. Police had arrested Tarrío in the District of Columbia two days before the riot and charged him with vandalizing a Black Lives Matter banner at a historic Black church during a protest in December 2020. A judge ordered Tarrío to stay out of the nation's capital.</p>

Before he left Washington, Tarrio met with Oath Keepers founder and leader Elmer “Stewart” Rhodes and others in an underground parking garage for approximately 30 minutes, authorities say. Rhodes and several other members or associates of the anti-government Oath Keepers militia group are charged with seditious conspiracy in the Capitol attack.

A documentary filmmaker recorded part of the garage meeting.

"But not much about the substance of the meeting can be gleaned from the clips — at one point, Tarrio and others motion for the filmmaker to stop," Kelly noted in his order.

Tarrio claims to have stepped down as Proud Boys' national chairman.

Five other men linked to the Proud Boys — Ethan Nordean, Joseph Biggs, Zachary Rehl, Charles Donohoe and Dominic Pezzola — were charged in the same March 7 indictment as Tarrio.

Donohoe, 34, of Kernersville, North Carolina, pleaded guilty in April to conspiracy and assault charges and has agreed to cooperate in the Justice Department's cases against other Proud Boys members.

Nordean, Biggs, Rehl and Pezzola also remain jailed while awaiting a trial scheduled for August.

Nordean, of Auburn, Washington, was a Proud Boys chapter president. Biggs, of Ormond Beach, Florida, has described himself as a Proud Boys organizer. Rehl was president of the Proud Boys chapter in Philadelphia. The indictment describes Pezzola, of Rochester, New York, as a member of his local Proud Boys chapter.

Tarrio tried to communicate with Nordean and Biggs by telephone while the two men were moving in and out of the Capitol, the indictment says.

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